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THE Atlantic

OCTOBER 2006

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NIGHTMARE IS
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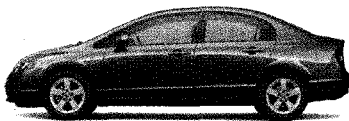
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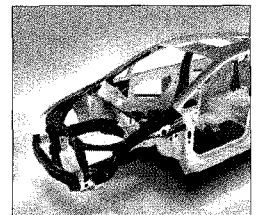
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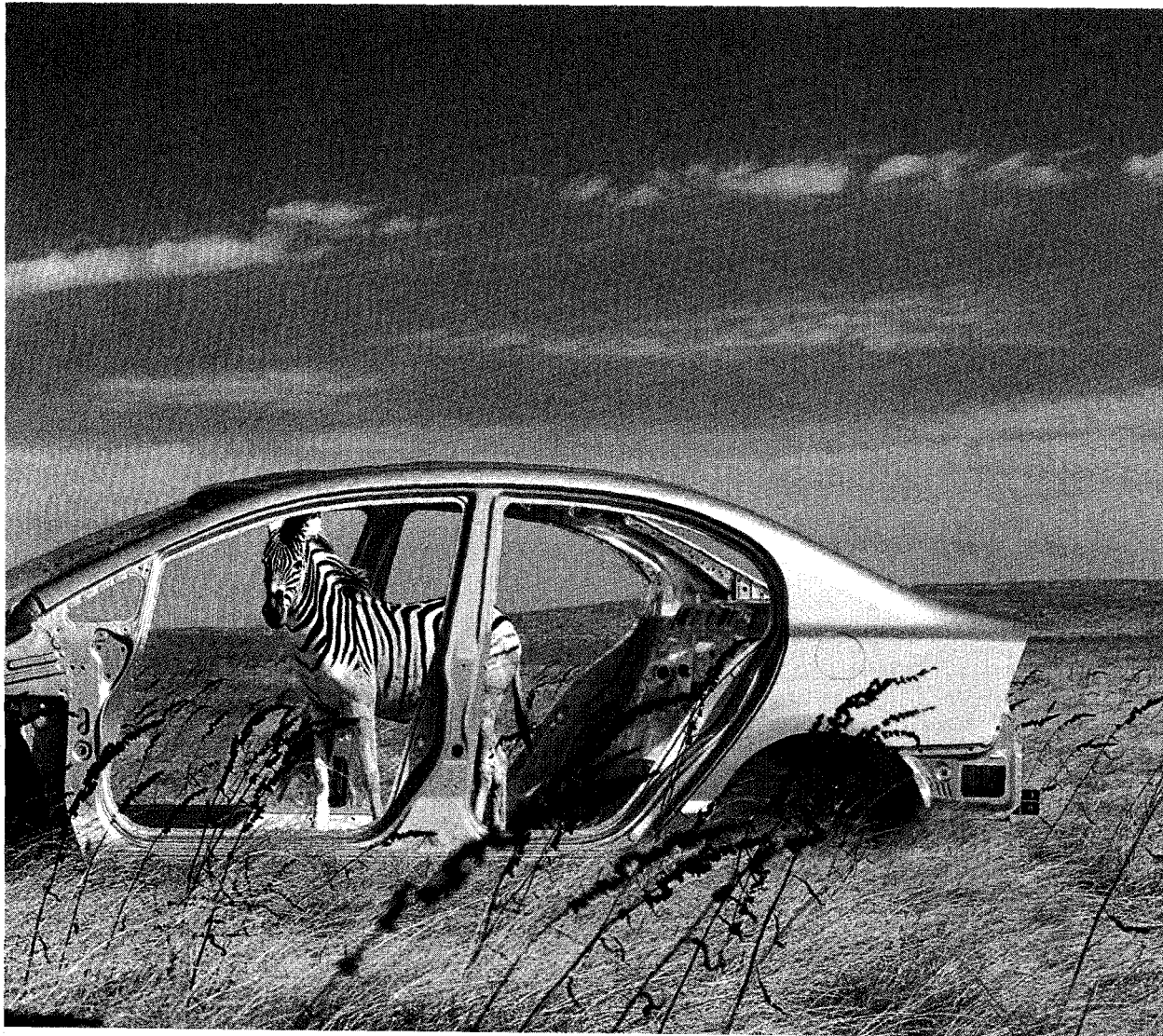
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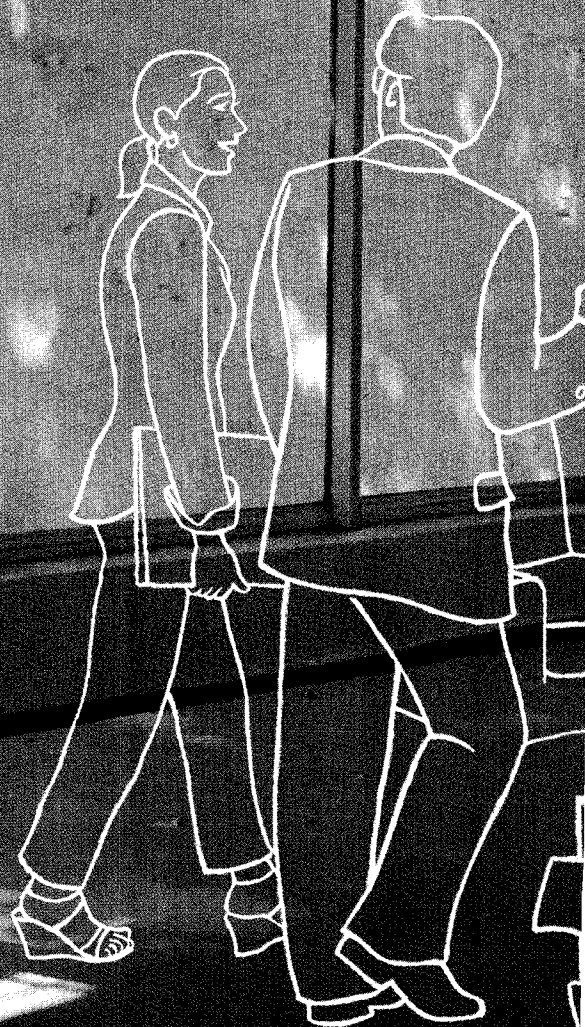
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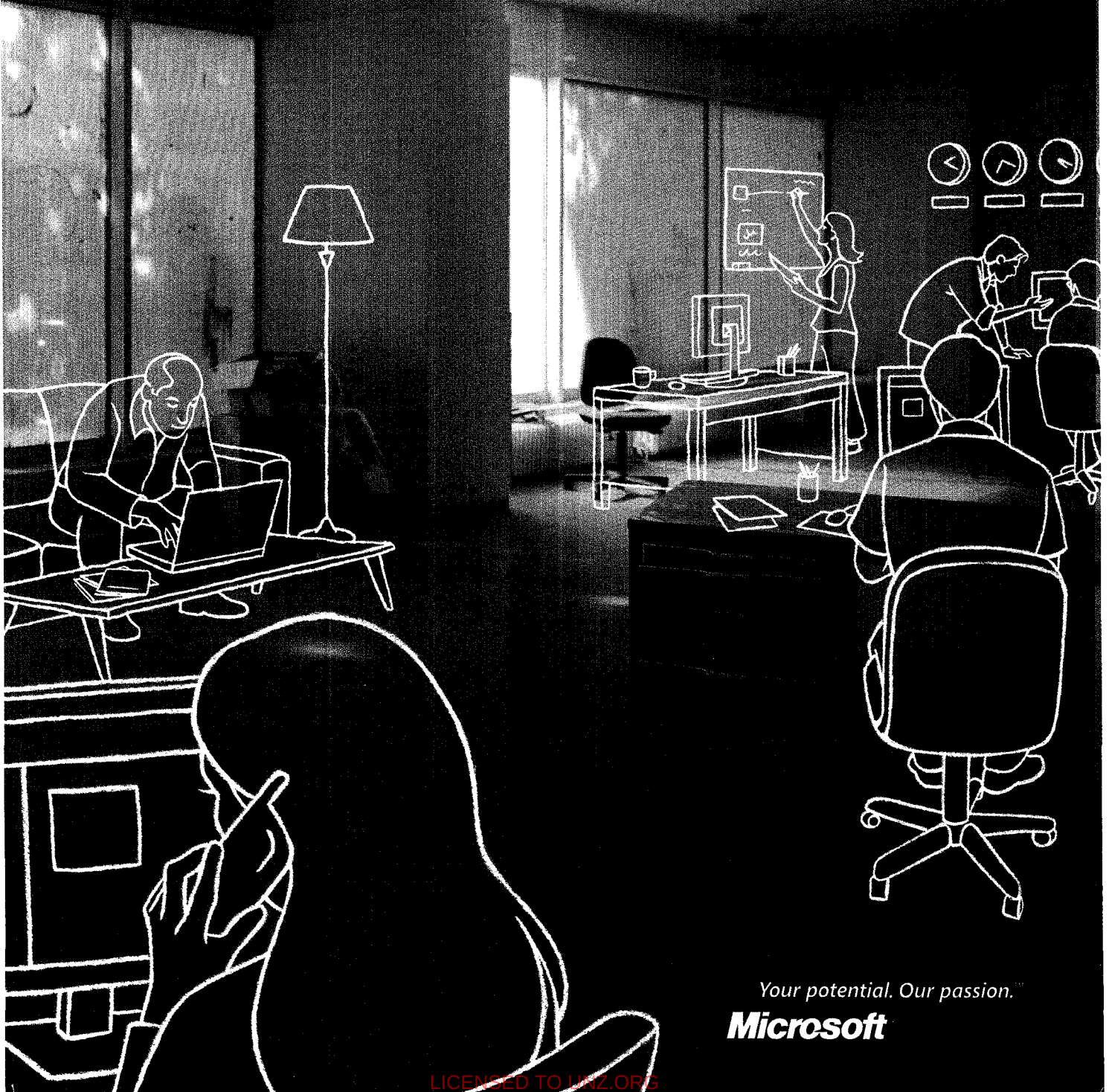
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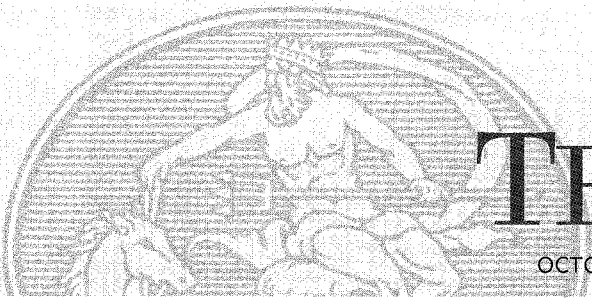
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Korean leader Kim Jong Il

KCNA/EPA/CORBIS;
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THIS MONTH ON THE ATLANTIC ONLINE: www.theatlantic.com

INTERVIEW: PREEMPTIVE JUSTICE

Amy Waldman discusses the risky business of prosecuting would-be terrorists for acts that they have not yet committed

INTERVIEW: STOP THE INSANITY!

Sandra Tsing Loh talks about the ridiculous measures that today's overinvolved parents take in trying to give their kids a head start in the academic rat race

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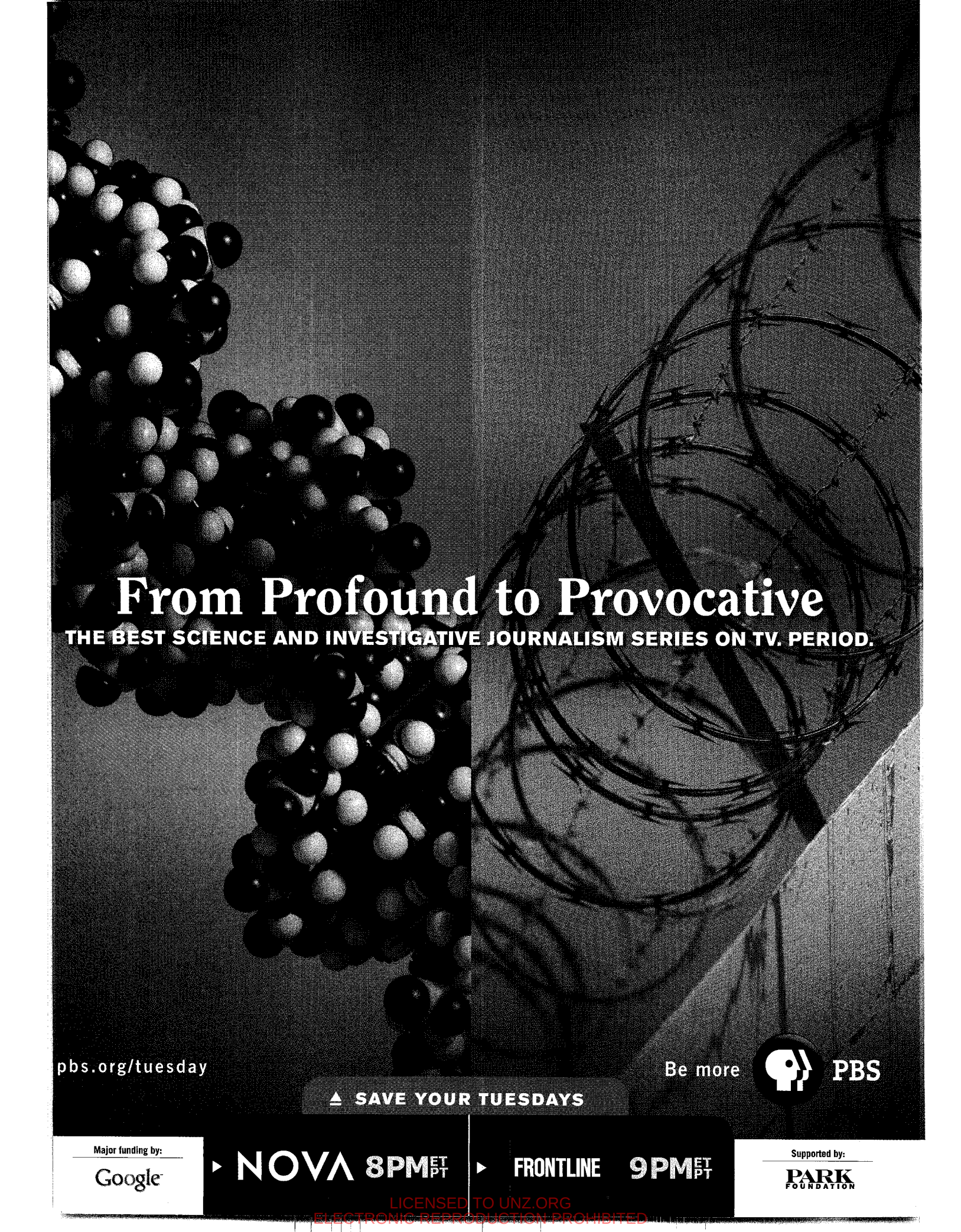
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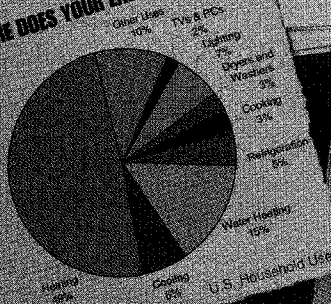
Because of surging economies in the developing world and continued growth among the industrialized nations, global energy use is climbing. As a result, supplies are tight. Prices are rising. And energy users are calling for viable alternatives.

The good news is we've got a huge source of alternative energy all around us. It's called conservation, and it's the lowest cost new source of energy we have at hand. A reduction of just 5% of global energy use would save us the equivalent of over 10 million barrels of oil a day. Clearly, saving energy is like finding it. So how do we do it?

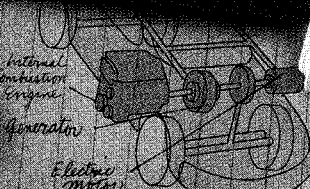
Incorporating energy efficient technology into new construction could reduce consumption by 40%. Governments and businesses must reduce their own energy use and promote conservation to their citizens and employees. Further improvements in fuel efficiency will play a crucial role, too. And the average person wields incredible power when it comes to conserving energy, from driving slower to switching to more efficient home appliances.

Of course, not only does using less energy mean there's more fuel to go around, it also means fewer greenhouse gas emissions. The fact is, if everyone began conserving today, we'd see results immediately. We've taken some of the steps needed to get started but we need your help to get the rest of the way.

WHERE DOES YOUR ENERGY GO?



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Conservation Facts:

If everyone reduced their driving speed from 65 to 55 mph, we'd save three million gallons of gas a day.

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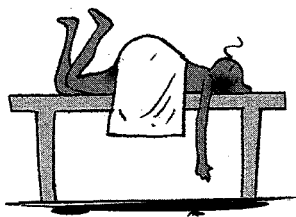
- Since 1992, Chevron has improved energy efficiency by 24%
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OCTOBER 1 Massage Reform

Ten years after Bill Clinton signed the landmark welfare-reform bill, the Bush administration continues to squeeze. Though welfare rolls are down 57 percent, new rules take effect today to tighten work and job-training requirements. Likely out: bed rest, massage, and "personal journaling."

OCTOBER 2 Fall Term, Light Schedule

The Supreme Court returns today, though you'd hardly know it from the light caseload (due to stinginess in granting certiorari). Still, there are some doozies: cases involving greenhouse gases, abortion, and race-based school assignment all made the docket.

OCTOBER 3 Border Casualties

Shanti Sellz and Daniel Strauss, aid workers with the group No More Deaths, stand trial today for bringing three illegal immigrants from Mexico to a

clinic for medical treatment. Each volunteer could get up to fifteen years in prison.

OCTOBER 3 Former Philanthropist Faces the Music

Alberto Vilar, the dot-com Maecenas, stands trial for fraud and money laundering today, to the chagrin of the opera houses and other arts charities to which the businessman had pledged millions.



OCTOBER 5-7 The Final Frontier, Going Once ...

Trekkies, cast adrift in the universe since last year when the latest *Star Trek* series ended, can own a piece of the show after this weekend, when Christie's auctions off 678 items of Paramount Studios memorabilia (Kirk's jumpsuit, Worf's rifle, nymphomaniacal tribbles, etc.).

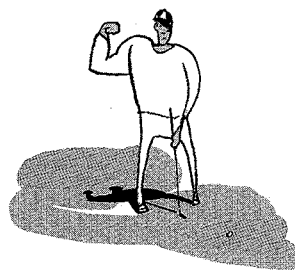
OCTOBER 10 Cashed Out

Thomas Noe, an Ohio coin dealer and major GOP fundraiser who already pleaded

guilty to making illegal campaign contributions, stands trial today for a coin trick that flopped: after GOP appointees gave him \$50 million in state workers' compensation funds to invest in rare coins, millions of it disappeared.

OCTOBER 22 Fast Lane Through Panama

Panamanians are likely to approve a referendum today to add a third set of locks to the Panama Canal, which would double the maximum ship size, cut wait times, and fend off stiff competition from the Suez Canal (which is a longer trip for most traffic to Asia, but has a wider and faster waterway). The work would be done by 2014.



OCTOBER 22 Putting Green or Smoking Green?

Is golf becoming a muscle game? Beginning today, players at the world amateur championship in South Africa will be tested for doping. Officials probably needn't worry about steroids, however: sporadic testing in the past has turned up mostly "social drugs."

OCTOBER 23 Weird Science

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad wears many hats: statesman, kidnapper, bugbear. Add "scholar" (but keep it in quotes). During the Iranian month of Aban, which

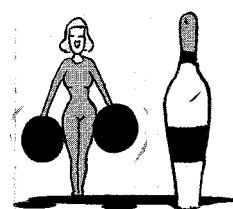
starts today, he'll chair a conference aimed at "scientifically" ascertaining whether the Holocaust occurred. Previously, he's called it a "myth" and said that Israel is "heading toward annihilation."

OCTOBER 23 Ken Lay's Millions

Ken Lay's recent death could protect his family financially: it will shield the former Enron CEO's share of the \$183 million the government had hoped to recoup at Jeffrey Skilling's sentencing today.

OCTOBER 24 Jeepers, Peeper

Anthony Pellicano may be heading back to the Big House. Reportedly the private eye for some of Hollywood's highest-powered agents (like Michael Ovitz) and divorce lawyers (like Tom Cruise's), he stands trial today for bugging stars' phones and bribing cops on behalf of his clients.



OCTOBER 24 Breaking the Pine Ceiling

Striking a latter-day blow for equal rights—possibly ten frames' worth—Kelly Kulick, a receptionist and part-time fender mender at a New Jersey auto-body shop, bowls today at a tournament in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, making her the first woman ever to roll full-time on the PBA Tour (an outfit that retains an old-fashioned candor about gender differences). —Matthew Quirk

ALSO THIS MONTH Cowboy Diplomacy

Is a showdown looming at the UN? Led by George W. Bush's squint-eyed archenemy Hugo Chávez, Venezuela may join the UN Security Council in one of ten nonpermanent positions. This month's General Assembly vote is neck and neck, with the administration's favorite, Guatemala, struggling for votes—precisely because of U.S. support.

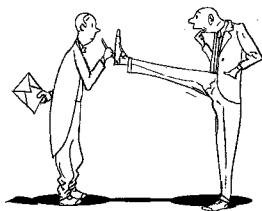


300 Million Americans

At the current clip of one birth every eight seconds, a death every twelve, and an immigrant entering the country every thirty-one, the 300-millionth American should show up, one way or another, sometime this month. The 100- and 200-million marks were eclipsed in 1915 and 1967 respectively.

No Skin, Lots of Accessories

The women's magazine *Elle* continues its Middle East crusade—to bring sassy to the Arab crescent! A new pan-Arabic edition that conforms to Islamic religious strictures launches this month. Safe bet for autumn: black is in.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Debating JFK

In his reply to Alecia Flores, who chided him for taking a gratuitous potshot at President Kennedy (Letters, July/August *Atlantic*), Christopher Hitchens—apparently riding his one-trick pony into the ground—takes yet more potshots at a man who can't fire back!

For instance, he refers to JFK as “the boy president”—a potshot that also has the virtue of being incomprehensible, since Kennedy was forty-three when he was elected president and had already been a congressman, a father, and a combat veteran. How much, one wonders, had Mr. Hitchens done by that age? How would he have liked being called a boy?

And then there's that old favorite: the smirking insinuation that Ted Sorensen, not JFK, wrote *Profiles in Courage*. We have mountains of sworn statements; we have eyewitness testimony to the actual act of writing (JFK was in the hospital during part of the book's composition, and, predictably, he was a great favorite of the nurses); we have handwritten and annotated drafts of every single page of the book. But does any of that matter? No! Not when a nod and a wink can pass for knowledge of a subject.

And how many witnesses, how many long-suffering dinner guests trapped in mini-lectures by the commander in chief, how many subsequent references and remarks made by JFK himself, does Mr. Hitchens need before he can refrain from implying that Kennedy wouldn't have read such books as Cecil's *Melbourne* or Agar's *Price of Union*?

Finally, Mr. Hitchens gets his dramatic personae wrong. JFK wouldn't have been “the Galahad of Camelot”—of course, he'd have been the king. One wonders how much patience he'd have had with bargain-basement Mordreds.
Steve Donoghue
Boston, Mass.

The Monster of Florence

The travesty of justice undergone by Douglas Preston and Mario Spezi (“The Monster of Florence,” July/August *Atlantic*) is the tip of the iceberg. The Italian judiciary (which includes the public prosecutors) is a branch of the civil service. This particular branch chooses its members, is self-ruling, and is accountable to no one: a state within the state! This body of bureaucrats can be roughly divided into three sections: a large minority, corrupt and affiliated to the former Communist Party; a large section of honest people who are too frightened to stand up to the political minority (which controls the offices of the judiciary); and a minority of brave and honest men with little influence. Political and dishonest judges have an infallible method of silencing or discrediting opponents, political or otherwise. A bogus indictment, the tapping of telephones, the conversations (often doctored) fed to the press to start a smear campaign, a spectacular arrest, prolonged preventive detention under the worst possible conditions, third-degree interrogations, and finally a trial that lasts many years and ends in the acquittal of a ruined man. Spezi was lucky, because the powerful Florentine public prosecutor is no friend of the Perugia prosecutor's and, I am told, “suggested” that Spezi be freed; the Perugia court, I am told, accepted the “suggestion.”

Count Neri Capponi
Florence, Italy

Fire the Clerks!

Somehow missed the connection between Stuart Taylor Jr. and Benjamin Wittes's professed concerns about the Supreme Court (“Of Clerks and Perks,” July/August *Atlantic*)—the literary projects of various members, the

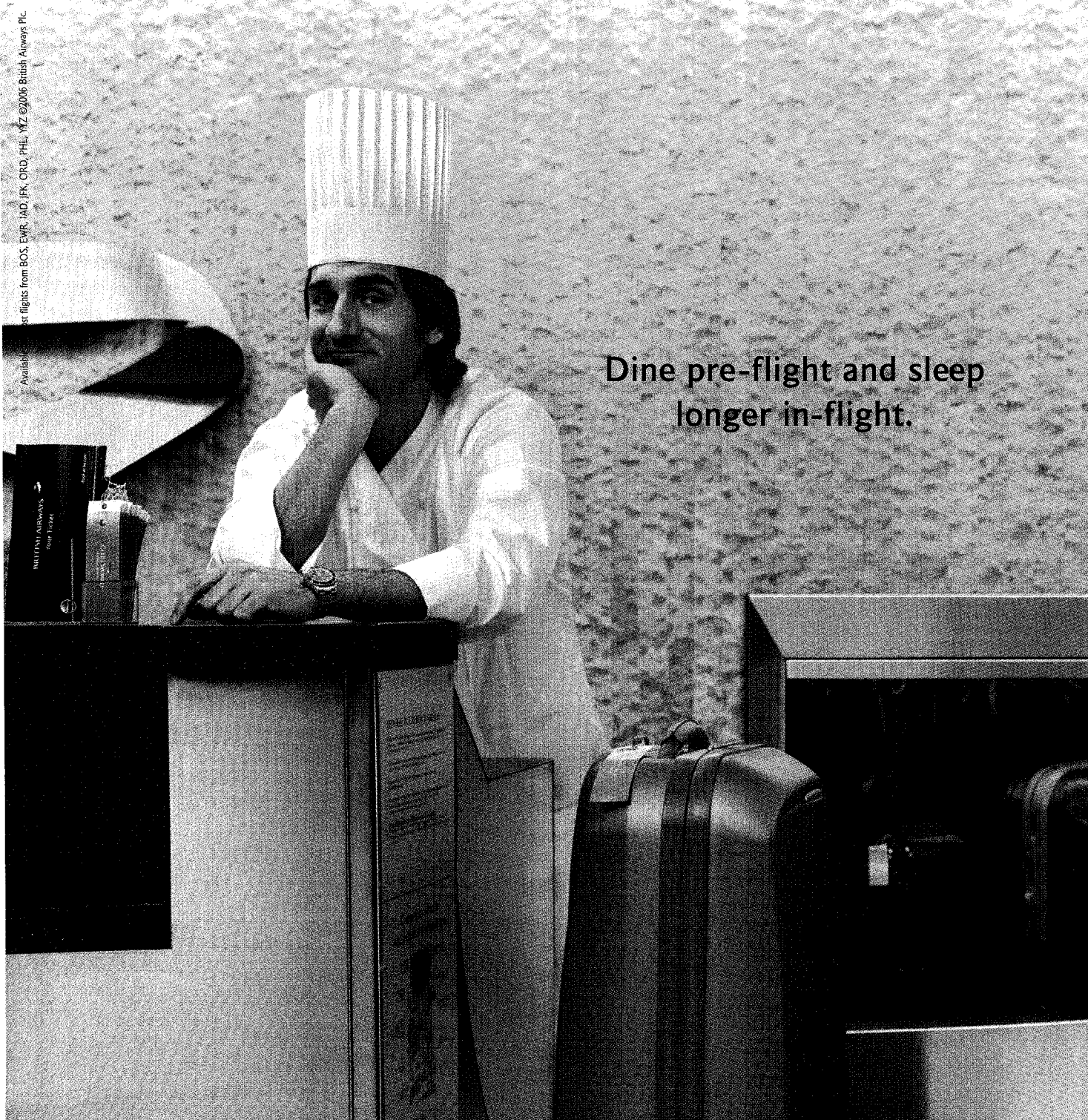
perceived lack of civility, the justices' choices about which cases they hear—and their proposed solution of firing the Court's law clerks. Their actual agenda seems to be to make the job of a Supreme Court justice significantly less pleasant. (Note the nostalgic reference to times when being a justice was “a grind.”) Why don't we also evict the justices from their offices, and expect them to write their opinions at Starbucks?

As Taylor and Wittes must know, it is customary in almost all law firms for a junior lawyer to draft a document and a senior lawyer to review what the junior lawyer has prepared. It's not clear to me why judges should operate differently. Now, a good senior lawyer may well need to make significant changes to a junior lawyer's draft; it appears from their summary, though, that this already happens with the current members of the Court.

J. Thomas Oldham
John Freeman Professor of Law
University of Houston Law School
Houston, Texas

In their Swiftian proposal to make Supreme Court justices work more by firing their law clerks, Stuart Taylor Jr. and Benjamin Wittes confuse caseload and workload. The Court's 160 “full decisions” in 1945 were published in a single volume that was about 1,300 pages long. The last term's sixty-nine signed opinions will be published in three volumes totaling nearly 4,000 pages.

The reason the justices “don't have to hear any case they don't wish to” is that the late Chief Justice Rehnquist was determined to focus on the cases of most lasting consequence, and Congress obliged by eliminating most of the Court's mandatory jurisdiction. Able to shape the field of its pronouncements, the Rehnquist Court ruled more by ruling less. The opinions



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became mini-treatises, and the basic legal research had to be perfect. Hence, the rise of the law clerk.

*Mario Loyola
Arlington, Va.*

Does Oil Have a Future?

In "Shock Absorption" (June *Atlantic*), Clive Crook assures us that the world isn't running out of oil. But the world has been running out of oil from the moment we began using it. And the question isn't when we will run out, but when production will peak and begin to decline. That's when our growing population will collide with shrinking energy availability—and many oil experts believe that oil production is at or very near its peak today. Crook's assurance that we have enough oil to last for decades makes it clear that he doesn't understand the problem. A February 2005 Department of Energy study found that we would need to start a crash program twenty years before global oil production peaks in order to avoid severe economic disruption.

*Carl R. Henn
Rockville, Md.*

Clive Crook claims that we have both plenty of oil and also decades in which to manage the threat of global-warming climate change, but he's wrong on both counts. Some of those "proven" oil reserves that Crook asks us to rely on are real; others are just figures pumped up to make oil companies and governments look good; still others are in places so remote or so politically unstable that they should hardly be counted at all. The cheap and easy oil—the light, sweet crude that gushes from wells under its own pressure—is a thing of the past. What's left is ever harder and more costly to extract, and ever lower in quality.

As for global warming, with carbon dioxide at 385 atmospheric parts per million—far higher than at any other time in the history of civilization—it's already well on its way toward changing sea levels and patterns of rainfall. We don't have the leisure to leave it to be dealt with over "an extended span of time."

*David A. Korn
Washington, D.C.*

Extreme Parenting

Alissa Quart solicited a variety of professional views about the flexibility of developmental windows ("Extreme Parenting," July/August *Atlantic*), but these opinions are countered by the evidence—noted in my book, *Learning Before Birth: Every Child Deserves Giftedness*—that the brain's postnatal plasticity is dwarfed by the cellular proliferation and massive die-off that occurs in the womb. Two months after conception, a genetic program triggers the manufacture of brain cells, about 250,000 per minute for ten weeks, with only 10 percent from this production surviving to gestation's end.

How, then, to substantially and safely upgrade human potential? Research shows that virtually all sounds in the maternal environment (television, radio, conversation) quite audibly reach the unborn child. Yet the loudest sound—cresting at ninety-five decibels, loud as a rock band—is the noise of the mother's blood constantly pulsing past the placenta. Although the fetus spends much of its time asleep, brain-wave activity demonstrates unconscious awareness of this booming stimulus, probably an ancient surveillance system. Moreover, the mother's heartbeat creates an imprint (a simple repetitious pattern that becomes cortically ingrained), through a form of involuntary learning that concludes at the end of a full-term pregnancy.

In 1982, I discovered how to record this in utero blood pulse, then electronically digitize this natural sound at subtly faster rates, sequentially introducing slight tonal shifts—in effect, a cardiac curriculum—that, when played back to the baby a few hours every day, would exercise its forming mental circuitry. The point was to imprint memory with recognizable variants (not sophisticated music or verbal content, both of which are white noise to a fetus) so that when the moment of cataclysmic cell death arrived, less pruning would take place, because a more mature brain had begun doing what humans do best: playing with age-appropriate patterns.

As complexities mount everywhere, no topic is more pressing than how our

outmoded abilities and behaviors can be improved. Extreme parenting—at the right time—is essential under extreme conditions.

*Brent Logan
Director, Prenatal Institute
Seattle, Wash.*

Alissa Quart's characterization of Maria Montessori's insights into how children learn was misinformed. The idea that "pupils would learn willingly if their schoolwork were more like play" is in fact antithetical to Maria Montessori's original observations and intentions. The Montessori method is founded on the premise that children thrive when learning practical skills and using genuine tools. Montessori discarded toys from her Casa de Bambini because she observed that the children she had gathered from the slums of Rome preferred to work, rather than "play." As a result, toys are conspicuously absent in any Montessori classroom, and children are engaged in practical tasks such as cleaning, sewing, cooking, and organizing, as well as tasks that involve hands-on approaches to mathematics and language.

*Carrie Frederick Frost
Outgoing Director, East River Montessori
Bluefield, W. Va.*

In response to Alissa Quart's article, I wish to clarify the position of Parents' Action for Children regarding the needs of young children, and to describe the focus of our work today. We share Ms. Quart's concerns about the recent vogue of "extreme parenting," but urge readers not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Contemporary research overwhelmingly confirms our view that "the first years last forever"—not in the sense that developmental windows slam shut according to rigid timetables, but in the sense that parents do have unique opportunities during these years to build strong emotional, cognitive, and social foundations for their children's entire lives. And we regret that growing awareness of these opportunities is being aggressively and often misleadingly exploited by the "Baby Genius Edutainment Complex." Far from encouraging the industry's

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overhyped quick fixes, Parents' Action recommends the kind of intentional day-to-day, one-on-one interactions—such as talking, reading, singing, and playing—that are key to parental bonding and early development for infants and toddlers.

*Norman Rosenberg
President and CEO
Parents' Action for Children
Washington, D.C.*

The Myths of Management

Three cheers (or is it four?) for Matthew Stewart's article ("The Management Myth," June *Atlantic*), which not only points out that the management emperor is naked but also accurately describes the con artists who sell the marvelous management suits in which all of our finest enterprises clothe themselves—suits that only we poor commonsense fools cannot see.

But why does Mr. Stewart suggest that we substitute academic philosophers for M.B.A.s—that is, one set of charlatan tailors for another? Successful business is essentially the pragmatic art of survival. It is about challenge and competition, prospering in the face of ever-changing obstacles and threats. Might it not be better for our business leaders to study the campaigns of Brasidas, Alexander, and Hannibal, rather than the musings of Plato, Aristotle, and Lucretius? Might they not be better prepared if they studied Clausewitz and Sun Tzu, rather than Hegel and Confucius?

*C. Kerry Nemovicher
Reno, Nev.*

While I understand Matthew Stewart's doubts about the value that management consultants deliver, his argument confuses popular books on management with what one learns in a graduate school of business. Most books on business are indeed fad driven, imprecise, poorly argued, and unscientific, but few of them actually appear in a good business-school curriculum. Instead, business-school classes are filled with far drier and more useful lessons on economics, accounting, operations management, and finance. Mr.

Stewart noted that in his reading, "not once did I catch myself thinking, *Damn! If only I had known this sooner!*" I doubt that Mr. Stewart was reading books that form the backbone of business-school syllabi, such as *Competition Demystified*, by Bruce Greenwald and Judd Kahn; *Analysis for Financial Management*, by Robert Higgins; and *Inventory Management and Production Planning and Scheduling*, by Silver, Pyke, and Peterson. If he had, he might have enjoyed more of those moments of insight.

Overall, Stewart seems to disdain the study of business because it has neither the scientific certainty of many other pursuits nor the rigorous logic of philosophy. But such a distinction applies equally to all other social sciences, which deal with some of the weightiest questions humanity faces. To give up on these fields because their answers do not fit into neat frameworks seems foolhardy.

*John O'Brien
New York, N.Y.*

I am writing to offer a correction and a clarification to "The Management Myth." First, the correction: the article states that in 1908, Harvard "opened the first graduate school in the country to offer a master's degree in business"; actually, the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth was founded eight years earlier, in 1900, as the country's first graduate school of management.

More important, a clarification: Mr. Stewart himself fell for a myth about the modern M.B.A., which is that it can be equated to a survey of today's popular best sellers. There is a strong element of truth to his central thesis, that Rousseau and Shakespeare offer a better grounding for business management than a library of the gurus' tomes. Many of our best students here at Tuck come to us with a broad liberal-arts education, and successful business leaders are as likely to have undergraduate degrees in poetry or fine arts as in finance or economics. But the popular management best sellers are only a small sliver of a true business education. An M.B.A. from a top business school gives you a solid foundation in quantitative fields like accounting and finance; it gives you

the terminology, the underlying theories, and the best practices; and it allows you to expand your understanding of how that all works in actual business settings. It also explores the "soft skills" that are so important, from ethics to leadership to communication.

If Mr. Stewart is interested in sampling the full spectrum of a modern M.B.A., we'd love to have him up here at Tuck and do our best to kill some myths together.

Paul Danos

Dean

*Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth
Hanover, N.H.*

Matthew Stewart replies:

On the question of fact: the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth was indeed founded first, as Paul Danos says; but Harvard was first to offer a master's degree in business administration.

I am grateful to Mr. Danos and John O'Brien for pointing out what I should have made clearer in my article: that M.B.A. programs and the management best-seller lists

are two different things. I treated both in one article, not because I think they are the same but because they both draw from the same origins in the history of management thought and contribute (in distinct ways) to the perpetuation of the management myth.

At the same time, I fear that Mr. Danos is overly optimistic when he suggests that business education is largely free from the taint of the best-seller lists. In the section of my article in which I discussed M.B.A.s, I did name one "guru," Michael Porter—a professor at the Harvard Business School—and I'm sure that a refined analysis of the popular literature would make room for the special class of "tenured gurus." I would also like to alert Mr. Danos to the fact that some decidedly untenured gurus have been worming their way onto the curricula, as business schools bow to the demands of their customers—I mean, students—for the latest goods.

Nonetheless, ever the optimist, I support scholarly, empirically grounded, and well-written research into business, and I even hold out hope that it might one day elbow aside some of the pulp on the best-seller lists.

I'm sure Mr. O'Brien will be relieved to hear that he and I are both with Aristotle on this one: in the study of any particular subject, we should seek the level of precision of which it admits, not more or less. But, as Aristotle (or, for that matter, any academic) might add, conducting research and preparing students for business careers are two very different things. At the end of this particular debate, I foresee a case for more business Ph.D.s, not more M.B.A.s.

Finally, I'd like to assure Mr. Danos, his fellow deans, and other readers that I do not advocate the wanton demolition of business schools. In fact, I thought I was being rather generous in my article when I pointed out that M.B.A. programs deliver a certain amount of useful, specialized knowledge to their students; that the best programs make an effort to impart relevant skills; and that most graduates I know are, on balance, positive about the experience. My concern is this: once you take away the benefits that are extrinsic to the content of the education (e.g., the social and cultural capital and the placement services), there is little that an M.B.A. degree can do that an



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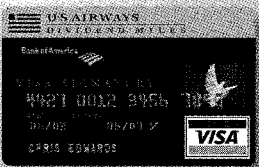
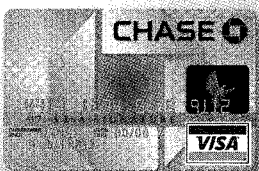
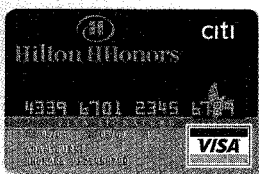
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advanced degree in any number of other fields can't. This doesn't mean that prospective students should tear up their B-school applications (those extrinsic benefits, for one thing, are pretty hard to replicate); but it does say something about the nature of management education, and I hope it will embolden recruiters and job seekers to, er, think outside the box.

The Debacle in Iran

Mark Bowden states ("The Desert One Debacle," May *Atlantic*) that a group of soldiers from the 75th Ranger Regiment out of Fort Benning, Georgia, participated in the Desert One mission. In fact, the Rangers that participated in Operation Eagle Claw were from Company C, 1st Battalion (Ranger) 75th Infantry, stationed at Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, Georgia. The 75th Ranger Regiment was not formed until 1984, when the 3rd Ranger Battalion and Regimental Headquarters were activated.

David H. Lewis
Aiken, S.C.

Mark Bowden replies:

I regret the mistake, and I'm grateful for the correction. It will be fixed in my book.

The Presidents Must Be Crazy

Your item regarding the occurrence of mental illness in former U.S. presidents ("Primary Sources," June *Atlantic*) encourages readers to accept the popular notion that 50 percent of Americans suffer from one kind of mental illness or another. In particular, diagnosing bipolar disorder in Presidents John Adams and Lyndon Johnson, both known by historians to be men of passion and drama, is a reflection of the current absurdities of the U.S. mental-health-care system. The common feature of all mental illness is not the presence or absence of any particular symptom, but the inability to function normally. Men who have achieved the presidency have conclusively demonstrated their ability to function. That the authors of the report you cite are apparently unable to grasp this fundamental feature of

diagnosing mental illness, which is taught to every first-year medical student, is a telling example of how the U.S. mental-health community overreaches in its quest for influence and legitimacy.
Robert Graff, M.D. (psychiatry)
San Leandro, Calif.

I'm surprised that the list of presidents identified as suffering from a "mental illness" makes no mention of Andrew Johnson's alcoholism. During his tenure as military governor of Tennessee, observers suspected Johnson of absenting himself from his duties for days while on benders. After being elected as Abraham Lincoln's second-term vice president, Johnson spent the night before the inauguration drinking with friends. Scheduled to make brief remarks to the Senate, he gulped down two huge brandies in front of witnesses, staggered into the Senate, and delivered a rambling and incoherent speech that mortified Lincoln.

James Graham

Author, *Vessels of Rage: The Secret History of Alcoholism*
Lexington, Va.

Massage Therapy

In "The Next Starbucks?" (July/August *Atlantic*), Virginia Postrel mistakenly implies that massage developed because of prostitution, that it is only for making people "feel good," and that our profession adopted the term *therapy* to suggest "that it's good for you, which means you don't have to feel guilty about spending money on it."

First, massage therapy has nothing to do with prostitution. Prostitutes have co-opted the word *massage* to hide what they do. Second, while massage *does* feel good, clinical research shows it also can provide significant relief from stress, aid in recovery of muscle injuries, increase range of motion, and lower heart rate. Some people choose massage to pamper themselves, some use it to improve their athletic performance, some have regular massage to relieve stress, and some follow a physician-prescribed massage regimen to relieve pain or to help them recover from an

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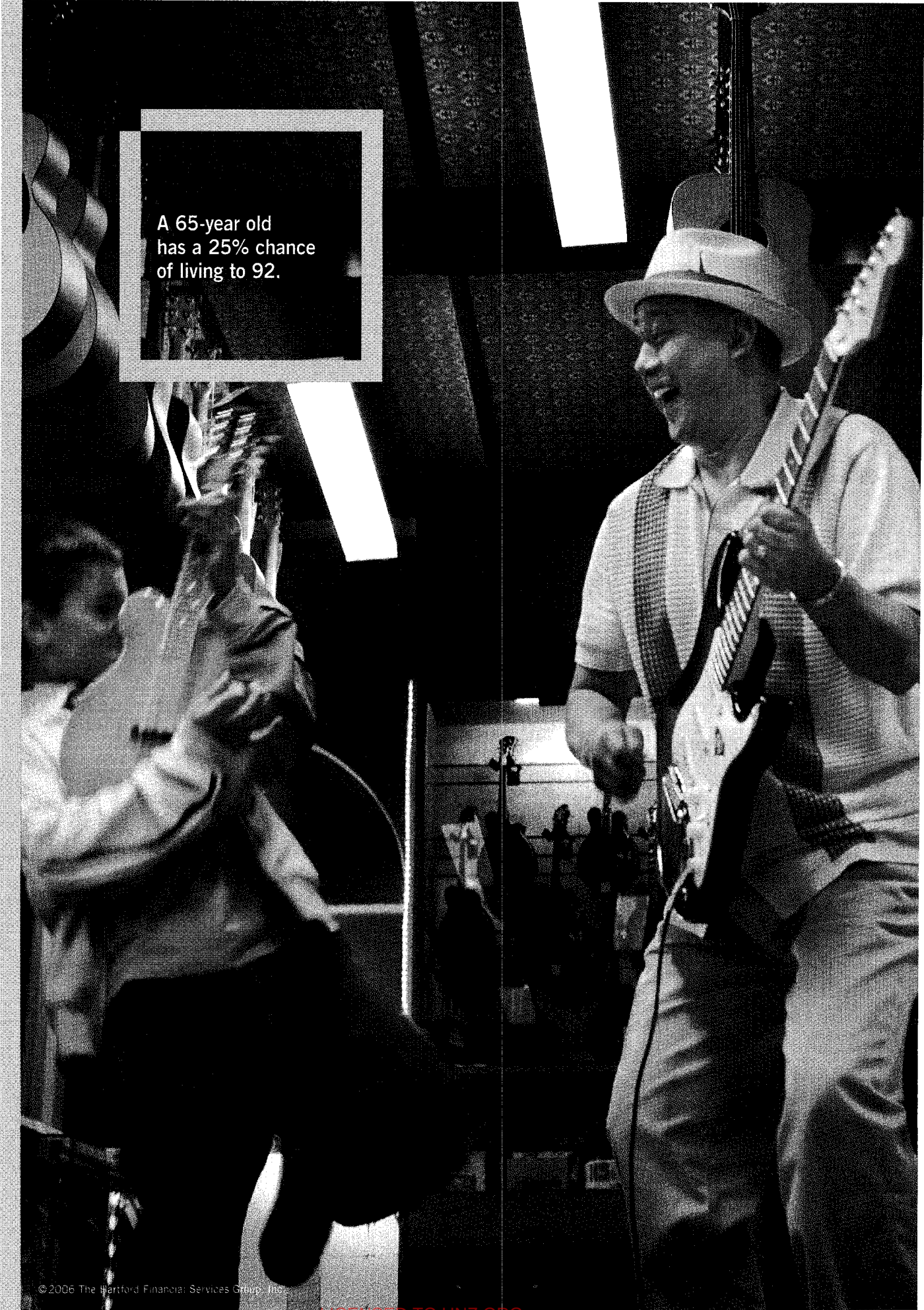
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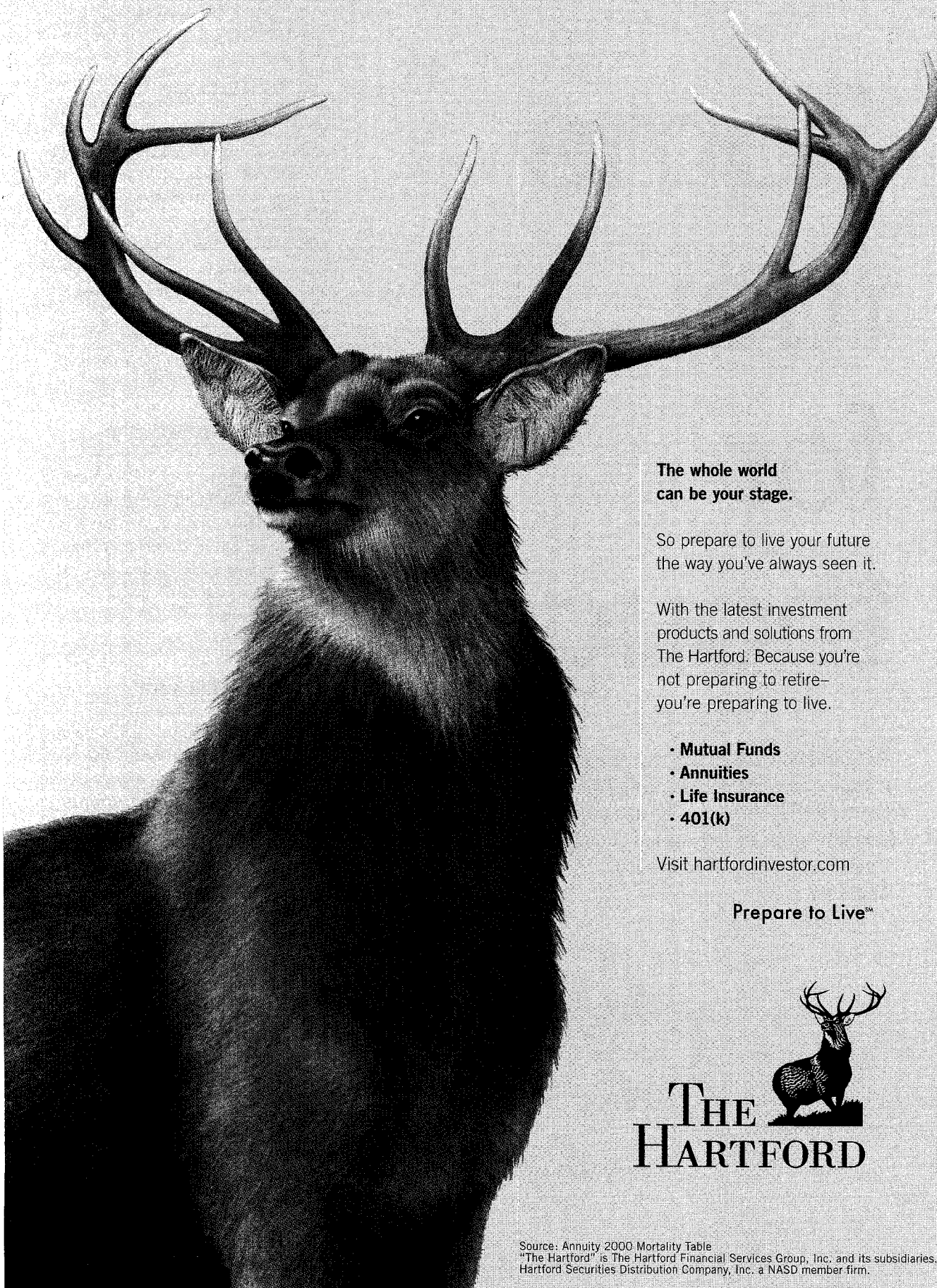
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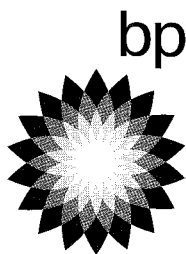
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injury or surgery. All of this is massage, and all of it is beneficial.

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Mary Beth Braun

President

*American Massage Therapy Association
Evanston, Ill.*

Equality in Death?

To read Mark Steyn's Post Mortem piece each month, one might think that women never die. Or worse, that women die but lead lives unworthy of critical reflection and commentary. How about a hint of gender equity?

Carolyn Haggis

Oxford, England

Honest Tea

I know a little about sugars, having taught chemistry for twenty-five years. In "Sweet Tea" (June *Atlantic*), Corby Kummer discusses different types of sugars found in drinks and foods, specifically fructose and glucose, even describing how they differ in stimulating production of insulin and leptin. Yet he then refers to table sugar as glucose (aka dextrose). It is not: table sugar is sucrose, a dimer of fructose and glucose, which means it must be biochemically metabolized into equal parts fructose and glucose.

Bob Shalit

Keene, N.H.

I enjoyed Corby Kummer's article on "Sweet Tea," but I am confused by his statement that "[o]nly in the 1970s did researchers succeed in converting cornstarch to syrup." During World War II, when sugar was rationed, we depended

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on Karo Light Corn Syrup as an all-purpose sweetener in many recipes. It was no different from the bottle that I have in my cupboard this minute. I baked my very first batch of cookies using corn syrup, from a recipe in my Girl Scout magazine. (I was probably eight or nine years old, and my mother couldn't risk turning me loose with our precious supply of sugar.) Was the process used in 1970 somewhat different from that in the 1940s?

Shirley Honore
Port Angeles, Wash.

Corby Kummer replies:

Baking (and pecan pies) would be the poorer without Karo Corn Syrup, which is valued for its ability to retain moisture (and thus increase shelf life) and has been made, according to Harold McGee's On Food and Cooking, since the mid-1800s. The process for converting cornstarch into high-fructose corn syrup, developed by Japanese researchers, is different, and first came into industrial use in the 1970s.

I didn't refer to table sugar as glucose, but in my review of the differences between fructose and glucose the analogy was indeed implied. Thanks to Mr. Shalit for catching my mistaken implication.

Editors' Note

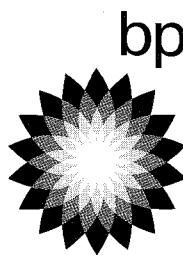
An article in the September 2005 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*, "In a Ruined Country: How Yasir Arafat Destroyed Palestine," by David Samuels, made several references to Mohamed Rachid, a former senior official of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Palestine Investment Fund (PIF). Subsequent to publication, Mr. Rachid, who declined repeated requests to be interviewed by Mr. Samuels, contacted the magazine to clarify portions of the article. The references to Mr. Rachid were intended to illustrate certain claims relating to the financial structure and activities of the Palestinian Authority and its late chairman, Yasir Arafat, and not to allege any fraudulent or unlawful conduct on the part of Mr. Rachid. The article did not state nor intend to imply that Mr. Rachid transferred PA or PIF funds to his individual account or used such funds for his personal benefit.

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Some biofuel for thought.

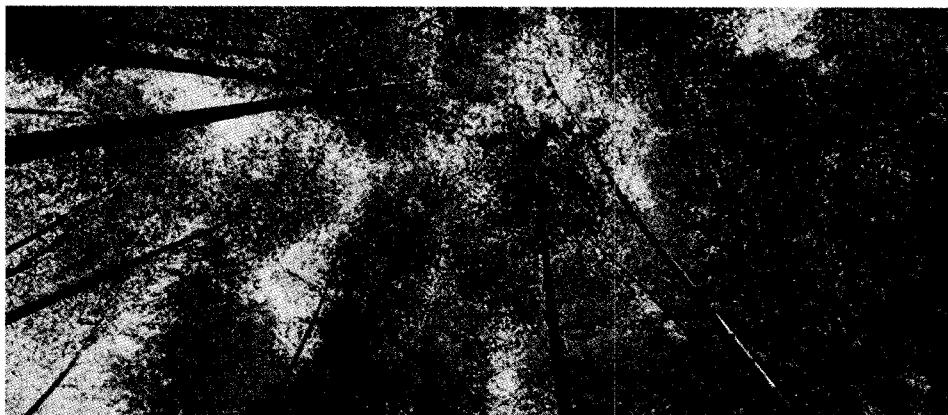
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COMMENT

Unwinding Bush

How long will it take to fix his mistakes?

BY JONATHAN RAUCH

History judges good presidents by what they do, bad ones by how long they take to undo. Although history hasn't yet caught up with President George W. Bush, midterm elections are about to—and those are often a referendum on presidential performance. Now is therefore as good a time as any to jump to a conclusion: the question history will ask is whether Bush's presidency was as bad as Richard Nixon's or only as bad as Jimmy Carter's.

Five years ago, with the ruins of the Twin Towers still smoking, many Americans—I should own that I was one of them—looked at Bush and thought they saw a Churchill, or at least a Truman: a leader fortuitously equipped for a difficult job at a critical moment. Bush's partisans are still holding out for mis- underestimated greatness, to be vindicated in the end. They think Bush will

be to the war on jihadism what Truman was to the Cold War: the guy who established the course that will see the country through decades of peril.

To those disinclined to suspend judgment for fifty years, however, Bush's course is looking less like a long road than a dead end. Even many conservatives have lost faith; in a recent interview with CBS News, no less a conservative luminary than William F. Buckley declared, "There will be no legacy for Mr. Bush." For the disenchanted—again, including me—the relevant points of reference now are not Churchill or Truman but Nixon and Carter.

One of the best ways to judge a president is to ask, Did he solve more problems than he created? This test is more severe than it may seem, because presidents are prone to mischief and grandiosity. With Presidents Reagan, Bush Senior,

and Clinton, the country had a good run. Reagan curtailed inflation and rebuilt U.S. strength; Bush broke the back of the deficit and closed out the Cold War peacefully; Clinton finished the fiscal cleanup and managed to assert U.S. supremacy while enhancing U.S. popularity. All made mistakes, but they got more right than wrong. Nixon and Carter, on the other hand, both did some good things (Nixon went to China, Carter deregulated transportation); but both, in the end, turned in negative balance sheets.

Carter's weak leadership drained American confidence and prestige, and his clumsy regulation of energy markets and dithering on inflation damaged the economy. Reagan, however, moved briskly to restore confidence, decontrol

the current year's deficit may come in at something like \$300 billion is little cause for comfort; with Baby Boomers due to retire and an expensive Medicare drug benefit kicking in, the country's fiscal position is weak.

The Iraq mess. The invasion was a gamble; the failure to scrub the prewar intelligence and properly manage the postwar occupation were mistakes. The gamble might still pay off, but the mistakes have astronomically raised the gamble's cost in lives, money, prestige, and U.S. strategic focus and position (Iran has been the invasion's signal beneficiary).

International opprobrium. The Iraq adventure fueled a precipitous decline in America's image abroad, and Bush's

potentially the most damaging, both to the sustainability of the antiterrorism effort and to the constitutional order.

How long will unwinding Bush take? Because of demographic headwinds, balancing the budget looks like a long-term project, requiring a decade if things go well, two or three decades (or forever) if not. Some of today's anti-Americanism, by contrast, may be anti-Bushism that will prove quick to dissipate. The Iraq situation could tip one way or the other, but Bush himself has acknowledged that the disposition of U.S. forces in Iraq "will be decided by future presidents" (note the plural). In principle, a domestic legal framework for the war on jihadism could be constructed in several years by a determined president and Congress (new treaty arrangements, such as a much-needed update of the Geneva Conventions, would take longer); or, much less desirably, the courts might wind up piecing together a ramshackle framework over a decade or more.

All in all, a reasonable guess is that unwinding Bush will take more than a decade but less than two, meaning the job will be harder than unwinding Carter but easier than unwinding Nixon. In doing it, however, Bush's successors will have one useful ally: Bush himself. Albeit grudgingly, he has begun working with Congress on terrorism-war legislation; in the realm of foreign policy, as former UN Ambassador Richard Holbrooke noted recently in *Foreign Affairs*, "George W. Bush's second administration has made a serious, and partially successful, effort to undo some of the damage the first Bush team caused." (Carter also tried to be a self-unwinder, changing course on détente and fiscal policy, but he ran out of time. Part of FDR's genius was that he unwound himself at least twice.)

Bush has two years left to unwind himself; and if he's lucky, he'll have a Democratic House or Senate to help. He has been cursed with a Republican Congress that has indulged his worst tendencies—but that problem, at least, the voters might soon unwind. ▀

Jonathan Rauch is a correspondent at The Atlantic and a guest scholar at the Brookings Institution.

Is Bush's presidency as bad as Richard Nixon's or only as bad as Jimmy Carter's?

energy, and support the monetary tightening that subdued inflation. By the end of Reagan's first term, Carter's mistakes were memories. Carter took only a few years to undo, which made him more a downer than a disaster.

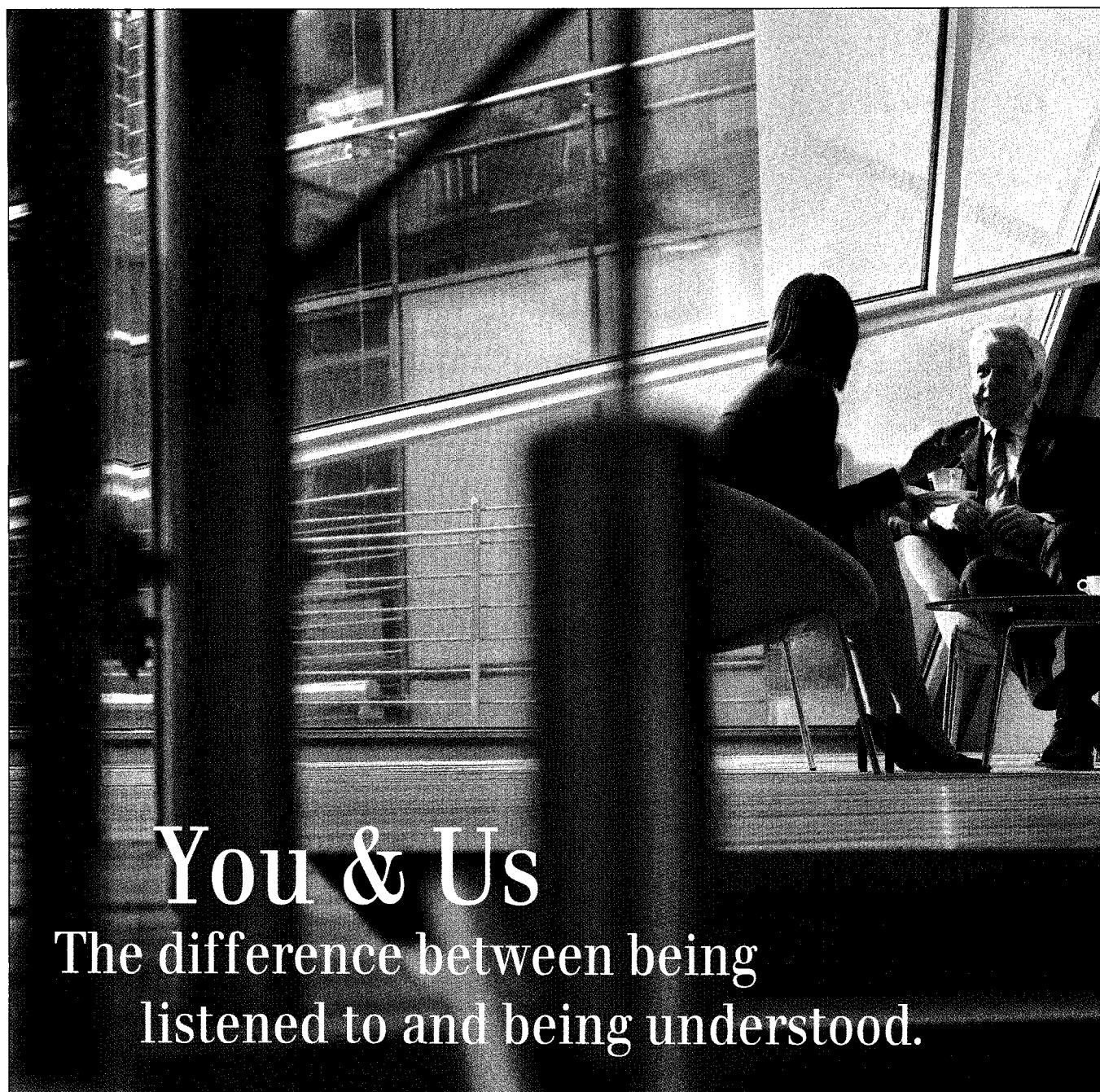
Nixon was a disaster. Unwinding him took decades, not years. It was Nixon whose cynical pump priming and absurd wage and price controls ignited double-digit inflation and bequeathed it to three succeeding presidents, with aftershocks (for instance, the savings and loan crisis) that lasted into the George H. W. Bush years. It was Nixon whose fiscal policies—cutting defense unsustainably while expanding entitlement programs—caused the deficit crisis that would torment every president through Clinton. Watergate and the administration's mendacious handling of Vietnam undermined confidence in government for a generation. Nixon's mistakes—and there were others—were gifts that kept on giving.

As for the current president, Buckley isn't quite right. Bush will leave a legacy, in the form of four headaches.

The fiscal mess. Bush's tax cuts and spending increases turned a \$236 billion federal surplus in fiscal 2000 into a deficit of more than \$400 billion four years later, an astonishing reversal. That

pugnacious style during his first term and his tin ear for foreign opinion made a bad situation worse. This is more than just a public-relations problem. National prestige is diplomatic capital; the more unpopular America becomes, the higher the price of foreign support. Mark Malloch Brown, the UN's deputy secretary-general, recently said that suspicion of the United States has grown to the point where "many otherwise quite moderate countries" are inclined to oppose anything we favor.

An extralegal terrorism war. If the country seriously intends to prevent terrorism, then spying at home, detaining terror suspects, and conducting tough interrogations are practices that the government will need to engage in for many years to come. Instead of making proper legal provisions for those practices, Bush has run the war against jihadism out of his back pocket, as a permanent state of emergency. He engages in legal ad-hockery and trickery, treats Congress as a nuisance rather than a partner, and circumvents outmoded laws and treaties when he should be creating new ones. Of all Bush's failings, his refusal to build durable underpinnings for what promises to be a long struggle is the most surprising, the most gratuitous, and



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The Fruitful Lie

Trade agreements have always been greased by deception about who benefits. Now they're failing because leaders have come to believe their own lies

BY CLIVE CROOK

Apparently, it was everybody else's fault. After almost five years of grinding negotiations, the Doha Round of global trade talks was suspended this summer, amid a flurry of reciprocal finger-pointing by many of the world's leaders. Almost certainly, this round—which once promised to significantly reduce barriers to trade in agriculture, manufactured goods, and services—is dead.

It shouldn't have played out like this. When the talks were launched, in November 2001, the world's governments called them a response to 9/11—the Doha Round would demonstrate a new ambition to work together for the common good. This time, the developing countries, especially, would benefit. Indeed, this was to be the "Development Round." Economic gains alone had been enough to ensure the success of prior rounds. This round was buttressed by geopolitical concerns as well, and by humanitarian purpose. Why, then, did it all go wrong?

The United States mainly blamed the European Union, for its reluctance to cut tariffs on farm imports. The European Union mainly blamed the United States, for its reluctance to cut farm subsidies. America and Europe wanted developing countries to lower their barriers to imports of manufactured goods. Many of those countries, led by Brazil and India, said they wouldn't unless Europe and America conceded more on farm trade.

Whichever side you take, this kind of explanation only makes the impasse more mysterious. The United States would, after all, be better off if it cut its farm subsidies. Those subsidies cause waste, and it is Americans, not foreigners, who pay for them. Ditto for the European Union and its farm-import tariffs. Citizens

of the EU would be better off if they could buy cheap imported food; the main victims of Europe's farm policies are Europeans. And the same goes for Brazil and India, and their tariffs on manufactured imports. If they lowered these fees, both countries would enjoy a higher standard of living, and their economies would eventually grow faster because their producers would be forced to greater efficiency by foreign competition.

There are short-term adjustment costs to consider, but the case for free trade that you read about in economics textbooks is the case for *unilateral* free trade. The real mystery is why complex rounds of reciprocal trade-policy promises—"We'll concede this if you concede that"—should ever have been necessary in the first place.

The standard answer is politics. The gains from freer trade—cheaper imports, mainly—are big, but they're thinly spread and hard for individual consumers to see. The losses are smaller than the gains, but they're concentrated in particular industries and thus more keenly felt. The losers—people who own or work for companies facing foreign competition—get organized and resist. To face them down, governments have to build opposing coalitions of winners—classically, exporters seeking lower trade barriers overseas. Starting in the 1940s, this is how successive rounds of trade talks worked. And they really *did* work. Again and again, the export interest defeated the protectionist interest, and trade surged. Few would deny that every participating nation benefited greatly.

It was a fruitful lie, this idea that the gains from trade come mainly from the exports you sell, not the imports you buy. But it was still a lie; the textbook case for free trade really is correct.

The interesting question is, Why has the lie stopped working? It may be that governments have just become more stupid about trade. Perhaps they've forgotten that the whole process—the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the World Trade Organization, all that stuff—was just a ruse. They have come to believe their own mercantilist propaganda, and have embraced the misconception that their countries' interests are served only if they can get the other guy to make concessions bigger than their own. Look at the way they walked away from the Doha Round—regretful, but with comical pride, heads held high. (India's commerce minister said, "We don't mind competing with American farmers, but we cannot take on the U.S. Treasury"—which subsidizes them.) All sides stood firm. Well, of course they did: they had forgotten why they were there.

And the Doha Round failed for another reason. Global trade talks are extremely complex, and a single government can veto the whole deal. So the proceedings need to be firmly led. They used to be—by America—but for a variety of reasons the task has become more difficult, and Washington no longer brings as much energy to it. Recent administrations developed an alternative: hub-and-spoke trade pacts like the North American Free Trade Agreement. Again, the thinking behind this strategy is purely mercantilist: maximize exports for any given increase in imports. Regional trade deals serve that purpose because they let the United States use the bargaining power of its huge domestic market more effectively, and thereby wring bigger concessions from its trading partners.

This local activity drains commitment from the wider global process. Worse, it creates new interests opposed to global liberalization. Mexico extracted hard-won privileges to sell goods on favorable terms in the United States as part of the NAFTA talks (at the "cost," remember, of opening its own markets to American exports). Universal trade liberalization would diminish the value of those privileges by sharing them more widely—America would turn to other developing countries for some

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ANTIQUE AUTOCRATS

Fidel Castro ruled Cuba for forty-seven uninterrupted years—making him the world's most tenured autocrat—before his grip slipped in August. Below are the next four longest-ruling living dictators. Their experiences suggest that money can buy the people's love, that power corrupts, and that after too long in the presidential palace, dictators tend to go a bit mad. —MATTHEW QUIRK

40 YEARS Taufa'ahau Tupou IV King of Tonga

The increasingly erratic, eighty-eight-year-old king of this feudal island nation was once the world's heaviest head of state, at 444 pounds. (He's since slimmed down to around 280.) Recently, he's been making cryptic announcements about an unnamed American investor who wants to deposit \$1 billion in the Reserve Bank of Tonga, raising fears on the island that the king may be falling for something akin to a Nigerian e-mail scam. Past financial adventures include the hiring of a former American dot-com investor as the king's "court jester," then entrusting him with the investment of \$26 million in state funds—with predictable results.



39 YEARS Sir Hassanal Bolkiah Sultan and Prime Minister of Brunei

Thanks to oil and gas sales, the sultan, known as the Big One despite his small stature, was once the world's richest man (worth an estimated \$38 billion in 1997). He's topped other lists as well, living in the world's largest private residence (\$300 million; 1,788 rooms; 4,000-person banquet hall; gold dome), and throwing the most lavish birthday party (\$17 million; three performances by Michael Jackson). The spending habits and sexual appetites of the royal family have brought legal and financial troubles to Brunei—among many other embarrassments, a former Miss USA claims she was lured to Brunei by the sultan and his brother Jefri, then gassed and fondled in the palace library. The sultan's slow-witted son, Prince Haji al-Muhtadee Billah—a product of the sultan's marriage to his first cousin—is first in line for succession.



38 YEARS El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba President of Gabon

Dubbed the Dean of Africa, this seventy-year-old father of at least thirty children has created a measure of stability and prosperity rare for his corner of the continent, thanks to its natural resources and to an extremely cozy relationship with the protective French petroleum interests and troops that keep order in Gabon. Bongo's mild cult of personality and election-time handouts (known locally as "electoral francs") have for the most part tamped down the population's occasional impulses toward real democracy. But opposition in the restive urban slums, and border fights with Equatorial Guinea over oil reserves (Gabon's supply is dwindling) threaten to tarnish the last years of his golden reign.



37 YEARS Colonel Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qaddafi Revolutionary Leader of Libya



The colonel (he has never given himself a weightier title, and in keeping with his Bedouin roots still sleeps in a tent, albeit a very nice one) has mellowed since the '80s when he was running a rogue state and funding terrorists. Stuck with shrinking oil profits, and spurned by many of the Arab leaders he once courted, Qaddafi—who travels with an all-female crew of bodyguards—began to reconcile with the West in the late 1990s. He eventually gave up his nuclear-weapons program, and in May was rewarded with the restoration of diplomatic ties by the United States. But he continues to behave unpredictably and was accused in 2004 of approving a plot to assassinate the crown prince of Saudi Arabia, with whom he had traded insults at an Arab summit in 2003.

of the imports it currently buys from Mexico under those special arrangements. In effect, NAFTA has given Mexican exporters an interest in resisting a generalized lowering of trade barriers. And NAFTA is only one of many regional free-trade agreements that have the United States at the center.

How much does it matter that the Doha Round has failed? It depends on what happens next. The failure to liberalize is certainly expensive: estimates of the worldwide losses stemming from trade barriers vary, but over time the cost will surely run into the trillions of dollars. And the biggest losers will be developing countries, including Brazil and India. That is the saddest aspect of this breakdown. The United States and other rich countries have already opened most of their markets to trade; their remaining protection, costly as it is, is mostly confined to particular industries, like farming and textiles. For the most part, that's not true of developing countries. Their tariffs and other import barriers are still relatively comprehensive and high, keeping imports expensive and sheltering manufacturers from the foreign competition that would raise productivity and growth.

The global cost of the Doha Round's collapse will be even greater if previous commitments to liberal trade start to unwind. Up to now, the World Trade Organization has acted as an obstacle to backsliding, by policing the promises made by members and arbitrating frequent disputes. Its ability to do that is not yet in question, but it soon might be. At a minimum, the use of global treaties to spur further liberalization looks unlikely at the moment.

So are we at an impasse, or even a breaking point? We need not be. The end of the Doha Round doesn't force any country to maintain its trade barriers. There is no law against lowering barriers unilaterally. That would be a great idea, and now would be a good time for it to catch on. But it would also require political courage of a sort we've not seen lately—from any country—and greater honesty about the true nature of trade's benefits. ▀

Clive Crook is a senior editor of *The Atlantic*.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: TAUFU'AHU TUPOU IV/AP; GETTY IMAGES; REUTERS/CHARLES PLATIAU; YINSEY ADDARIO/CORBIS; AP PHOTO/VINCENT THIAN

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THE NATION IN NUMBERS

Where the Brains Are

America's educated elite is clustering in a few cities—and leaving the rest of the country behind

BY RICHARD FLORIDA

America's social fabric has been regularly reshaped by great migrations—of pioneers westward, of immigrants and farmers to rising industrial cities, of African Americans from the rural South to the urban North, of families outward from cities to suburbs to exurbs.

Today, a demographic realignment that may prove just as significant is under way: the mass relocation of highly skilled, highly educated, and highly paid Americans to a relatively small number of

metropolitan regions, and a corresponding exodus of the traditional lower and middle classes from these same places. Such geographic sorting of people by economic potential, on this scale, is unprecedented. I call it the “means migration.”

The divergence of housing prices nationwide illustrates the means migration powerfully. Home values go up and down, but according to an analysis by the economists Joseph Gyourko, Chris Mayer, and Todd Sinai, since 1950

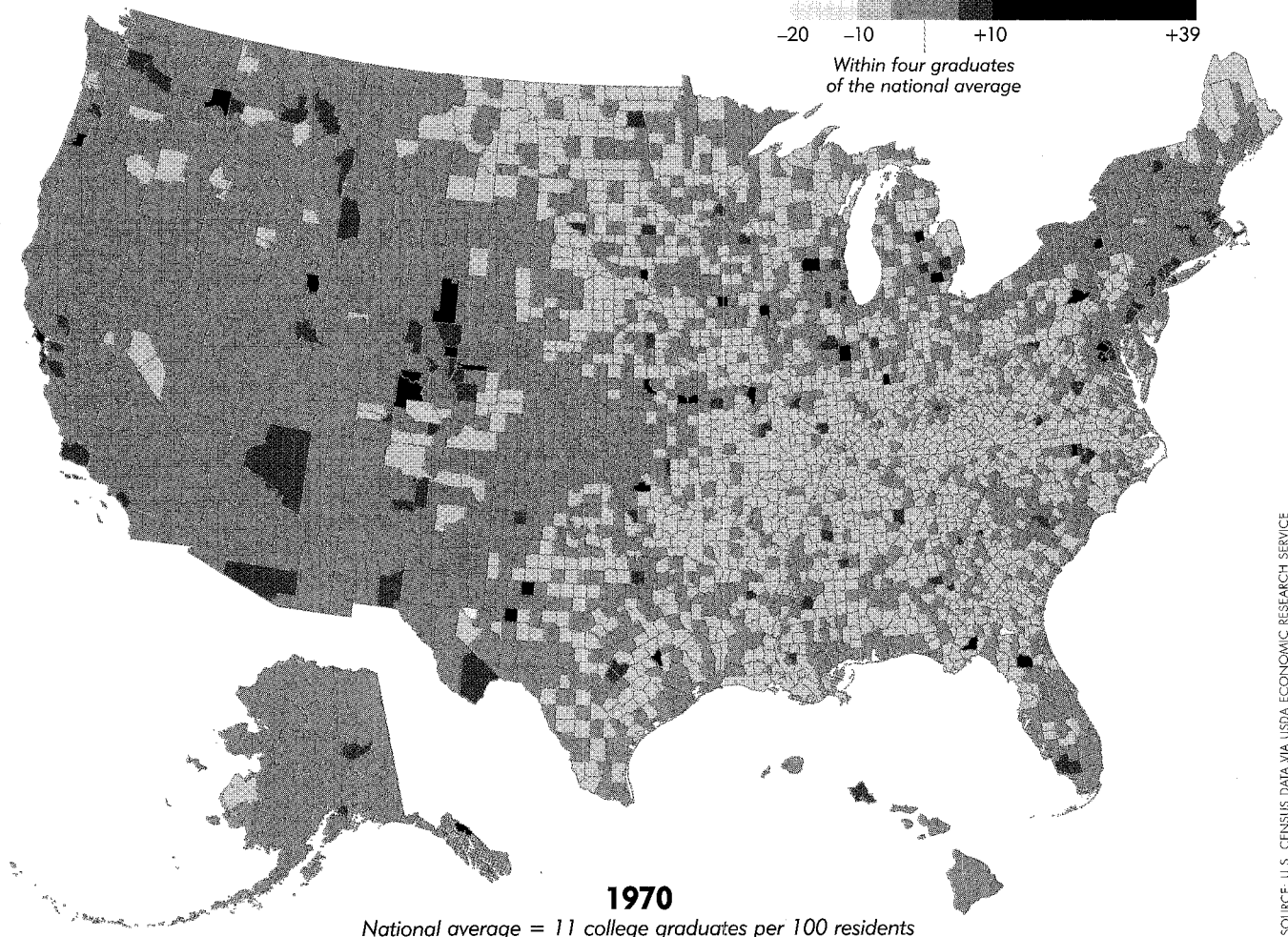
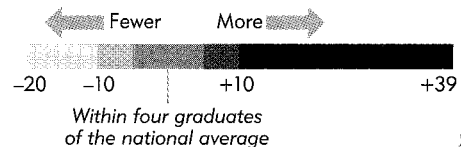
a handful of “superstar cities” (including central cities and their suburbs) has emerged nationwide—places where growth in housing prices has consistently and rapidly outpaced the average national increase, and where growth in housing supply is limited. You could probably guess most of them—cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Boston, and Denver; the affluent suburbs of Manhattan; innovation centers such as Silicon Valley, Austin, and the Research Triangle in North Carolina.

Many of these city-regions may well be in the midst of housing bubbles today, but that shouldn't distract us from a larger truth. In the long run, the price of real estate is the best available indicator of the “effective demand” for a particular place, and these places have been pulling away from the pack for decades. Superstar

THE MIGRATION OF COLLEGE GRADUATES

Since 1970, college graduates have flocked to select American cities

College graduates in each county, compared with the national average (per 100 residents)



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS DATA VIA USDA ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

cities are, by their nature, exclusionary, and there is good reason to believe they will become more so in the future.

The means migration can be seen even more clearly in the increasing geographic concentration of college graduates. According to research by Christopher Berry of the University of Chicago and Edward Glaeser of Harvard, in 1970 human capital was distributed relatively evenly throughout the United States. Nationally, 11 percent of the population over twenty-five years old had a college degree, and that figure ranged between 9 percent and 13 percent in fully half of America's 318 metropolitan regions. In Washington, D.C., 18 percent of the residents had finished college; in Cleveland, only 4 percent had finished.

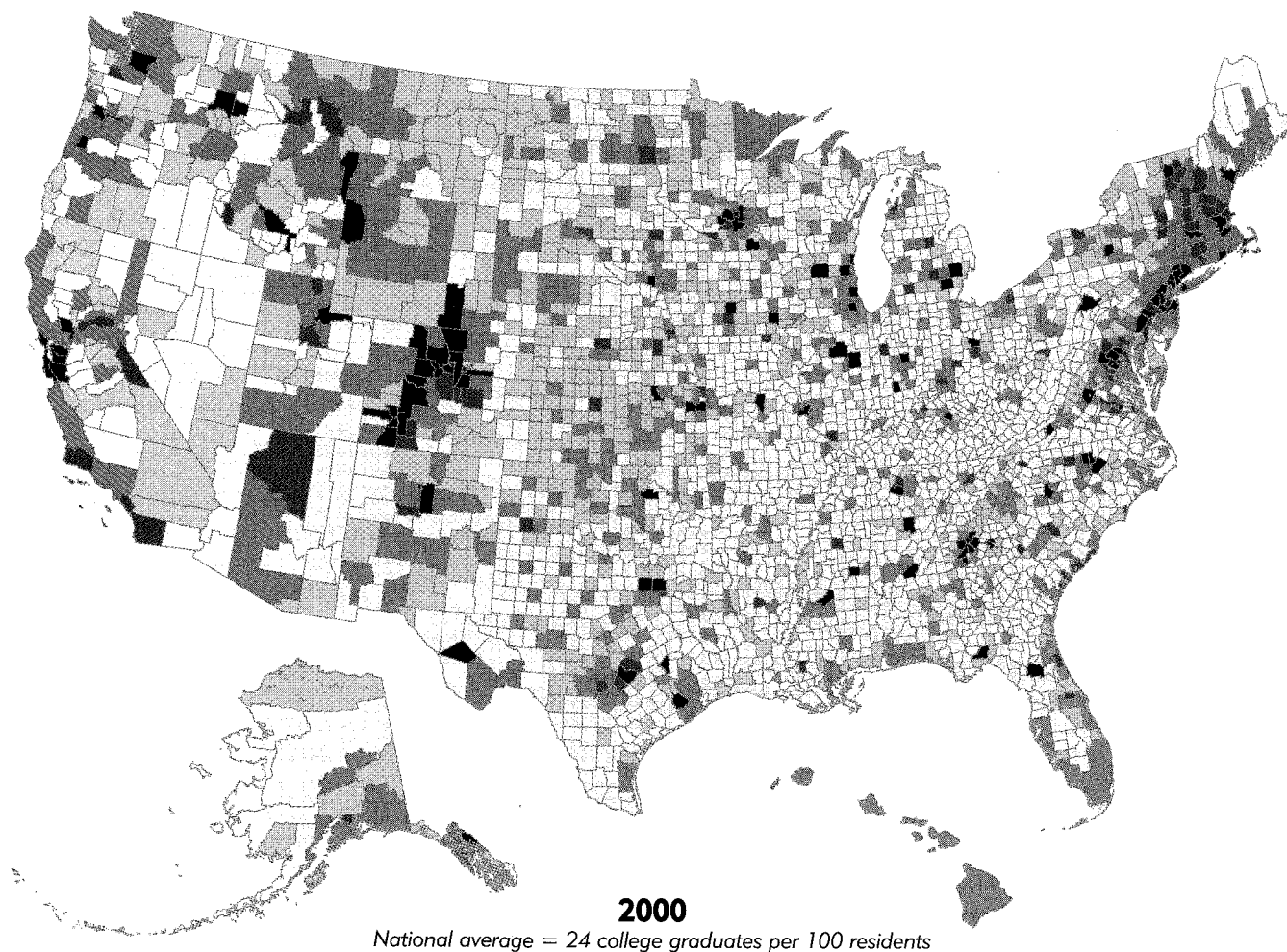
Over the past three decades, the percentage of Americans holding a college degree has more than doubled, reaching 27 percent by 2004, but as the maps below show, those gains have

not been evenly spread. For instance, about half of the residents of Washington, D.C., and San Francisco now have college degrees—versus 14 percent and 11 percent in Cleveland and Detroit respectively. The trends for graduate degrees show a similar pattern. In Washington, D.C., and Seattle, more than 20 percent of the adult population had an advanced degree in 2004, compared with 5 percent in Cleveland, 4 percent in Detroit, and 2 percent in Newark. In the downtown neighborhoods of high-powered cities, the concentration of well-educated people is even greater. In 2000, more than two-thirds of the residents of downtown Chicago and of Midtown Manhattan, for example, held college degrees. Most rural and many suburban areas, meanwhile, are being left behind. Significantly, young graduates are flocking in ever-greater numbers to the “means metros,” where they often live in penury until either making it or being forced out by the high cost of living.

What's behind this phenomenon? Some of the reasons for it are essentially aesthetic—many of the means metros are beautiful, energizing, and fun to live in. But there is another reason, rooted in economics: increasingly, the most talented and ambitious people *need* to live in a means metro in order to realize their full economic value.

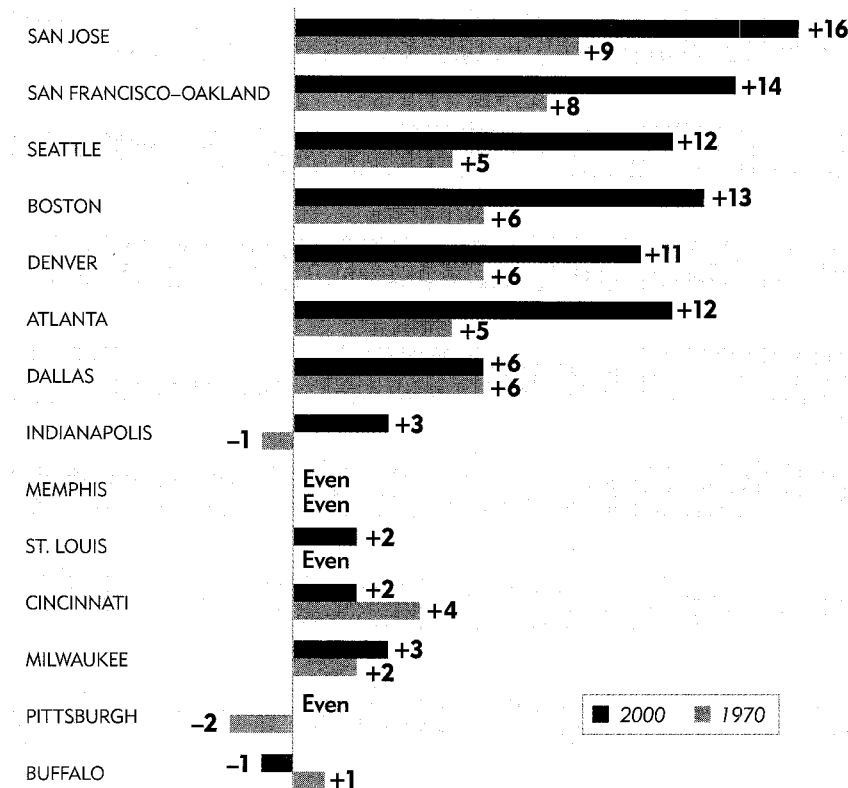
The physical proximity of talented, highly educated people has a powerful effect on innovation and economic growth—in fact, the Nobel Prize-winning economist Robert Lucas declared the multiplier effects that stem from talent clustering to be the *primary* determinant of growth. That's all the more true in a postindustrial economy dependent on creativity, intellectual property, and high-tech innovation.

Places that bring together diverse talent accelerate the local rate of economic evolution. When large numbers of entrepreneurs, financiers, engineers, designers, and other smart, creative people are constantly bumping

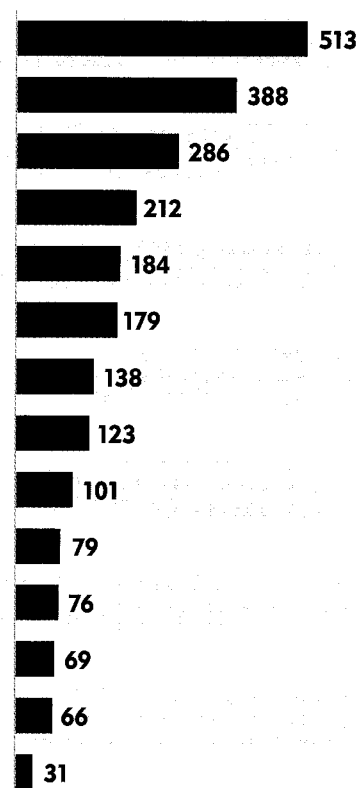


THE UNEVEN FORTUNES OF AMERICA'S CITIES

Number of college graduates per 100 people, relative to the national average



Percent change in mean housing values, 1950-2000



Education figures based on 1970 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) definitions; housing values based on 1990 Primary MSA definitions.

into one another inside and outside of work, business ideas are more quickly formed, sharpened, executed, and—if successful—expanded. The more smart people, and the denser the connections between them, the faster it all goes.

The local cultures of most, if not all, means metros have facilitated the establishment of many loose connections among people of diverse talents, lifestyles, and social circles (as opposed to a few tight connections within homogenous groups). They are socially tolerant and open to new ways of thinking. Job switching is common, as is periodic unemployment, and free agents find plenty of common spaces in which to work and meet. The soup is continuously stirred, and newcomers are assimilated easily.

But the means metros also have a larger and simpler advantage over other regions: a head start. For a variety of historical reasons—the presence of great universities is usually one—the means metros already have a high concentration of highly talented people. And as more such people are added, their multiplier

effect on growth seems to keep increasing. That's true not just for economic growth in the aggregate, but for individual incomes and opportunities as well.

Yet the opportunities do not exist for everyone. In both early agricultural and industrial economies, overall population growth was the key to economic growth, and economic growth meant opportunities across the board. But in a creative, postindustrial economy, that's no longer true. Changing technology, increased trade, and the ability to outsource routine functions have made highly skilled workers less reliant on the colocation of the unskilled and moderately skilled. What matters today isn't where most people settle, but where the *greatest number of the most-skilled* people does. Because the return on colocation among the ablest is so high, and because high-end incomes are rising so fast, it makes sense for these workers to continue to bid up real estate and accept other costs that traditional middle-class workers and families cannot afford. As traditional middle-class households are

displaced by smaller, higher-income households, population can decline even as economic growth continues. America's most successful cities may increasingly be inhabited by a core of wealthy workers leading highly privileged lives, catered to by an underclass of service workers living in far-off suburbs.

Some of today's means metros could fall back eventually as housing prices and living costs rise, and new ones could emerge. But there are powerful reasons to believe that the wealth disparity between some city-regions and others will continue to grow, and perhaps even accelerate, thanks to the snowball effect of talent attraction. "This spatial sorting," says Gyourko, "will affect the nature of America as much as the rural-urban migration of the late nineteenth century did." Accommodating that sorting will be one of the great political and cultural challenges of the next generation. ▀

Richard Florida is the author of *The Rise of the Creative Class* and *The Hirst Professor of Public Policy* at George Mason University. Jesse Elliott assisted with this article.

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU; HOUSING DATA COURTESY OF JOSEPH GYOURKO

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The Fight to Lose Congress

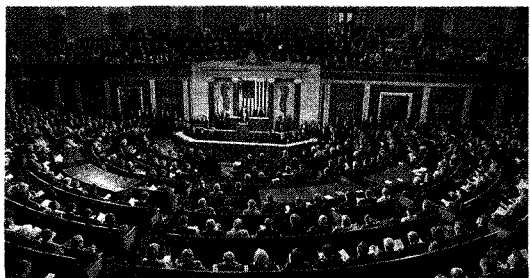
Some political strategists are hoping for defeat in November

BY CHUCK TODD

The folkways of Washington often seem strange to outsiders, but it's hard to imagine anything stranger than the question that's currently getting serious (but very quiet) consideration from political insiders this fall: Would it be better to lose November's elections than to win them?

"The best scenario for us is to pick up anywhere from ten to fourteen House seats and three to four in the Senate," just short of a majority in each case, says a top adviser to one of the leading 2008 Democratic presidential candidates. A loss this year "would focus Republicans' minds and missions in tremendously helpful ways for 2008," suggests a GOP strategist with ties to the Bush administration.

In the Machiavellian plotting of political Washington, next month's elections are merely a prelude to the main event two years from now. And some of the best avenues to winning the White House in 2008 involve losing in 2006. Here's a quick primer.



Avoid the illusion of power. No matter who wins in November, the next majority in each chamber is likely to be very narrow, and a bare majority is often the worst possible outcome from a partisan standpoint. "If we hold on to both houses narrowly," says the GOP strategist Tony Fabrizio, "we maintain the illusion of power and control, but actually have none ... We can't really get anything done, but will get blamed for all the problems." But if the Democrats win, Fabrizio contends, they'll bear some responsibility for government actions,

which "will make it easier for several GOP candidates to run as 'outsiders'" in 2008—the preferred path to the White House—"without having to take on the entire GOP establishment."

Fabrizio is one of the few strategists in either party willing to state openly that losing one or both houses this year would actually help his side in 2008. But under cover of anonymity, many operatives in both parties sound this same note. A prominent architect of several national Democratic campaigns told me she'd prefer to gain ground but stay in the minority this year, enabling her party to "build [our] electoral profile and improve our electoral success in 2008." "Leave the GOP in charge," says the Democratic adviser. "That sets us up to sweep the decks in 2008."

Put weak opponents in the spotlight. Leaving the Republicans in power, many Democrats suspect, might strengthen the widespread perception that the GOP is foundering. Some Republicans, meanwhile, would be happy to share the spotlight with the Democratic congressional leadership, which they see as feckless. "Once voters get a weekly dose of Speaker [Nancy] Pelosi without a meaningful, compelling, or substantive agenda," says a top GOP strategist, "they'll return quickly to the Republican fold." Republican professionals privately appraise Pelosi as tone-deaf, unlikable, and prone to heckling—a Newt Gingrich without the ideas. The damage that Speaker Pelosi might inflict, by association, on the likely presidential candidacy of another Democratic woman, Hillary Rodham Clinton, is icing on the cake.

No snacks before dinner. Never underestimate the effect of partisan hunger on national elections. "Losing the Senate in 1986," the GOP pollster John McLaughlin told me, "probably made the Republicans hungrier to keep the White House in 1988. You would rather be hungry." "Coming up a few seats

short keeps the hunger alive," agrees Pete Giangreco, an adviser to Democratic Senator Barack Obama. There's a cost to indulging partisan appetites at the wrong time. Significant congressional power swings in the 1954, 1986, and 1994 midterms seemed only to blunt the momentum of the victors, who lost the next presidential election in each case.

Perhaps with this in mind, not everyone is putting his or her best foot forward this fall. Democratic National Committee Chair Howard Dean, for example, has publicly feuded over resources for 2006 with Rahm Emanuel and Chuck Schumer, the Democrats who head the House and Senate campaign committees. Both Emanuel and Schumer want Dean to put more money into states and districts that are closely contested this year, while Dean is determined to build a "fifty-state party," which means diverting funds to places that offer no immediate electoral payoff. Dean has stated clearly that he hopes Democrats win next month. But strategically, he's taking the long view.

So, is it fair to say that *self-sabotage* is the watchword for the November election? No, that's going too far. Most strategists on both sides—particularly those without ties to a 2008 presidential candidate—would still prefer to win now. (McLaughlin and Giangreco, while they see an upside to losing, are among them.)

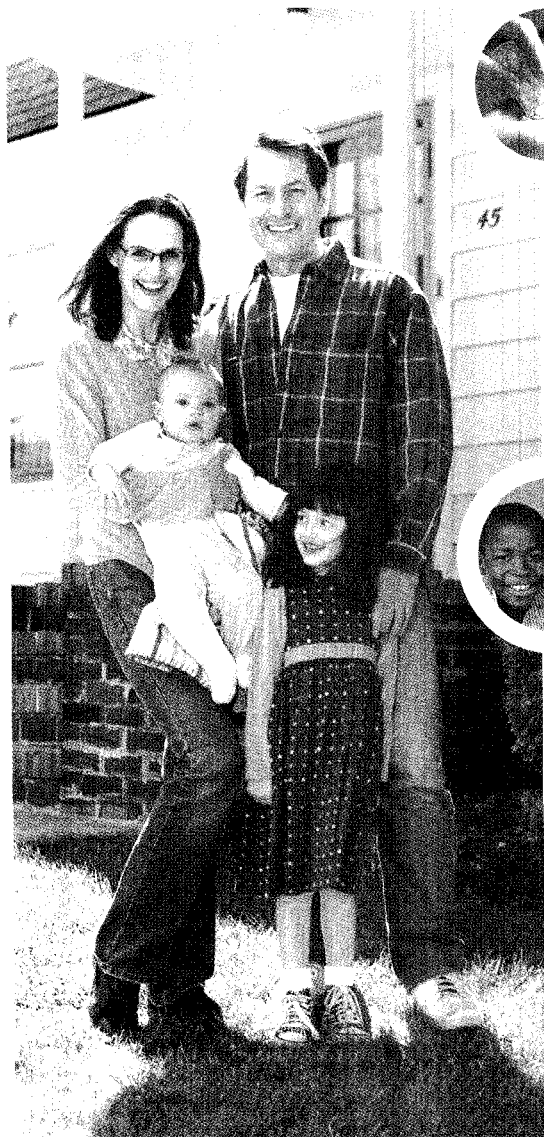
But leaders in both parties do seem to share a fundamental pessimism about the country's immediate future—and about the ability of Congress to do anything about it. Many political insiders expect the national mood in 2008 to be worse than it is today, and the politics more poisonous. With public trust in both parties waning, many of those whose task it is to win elections figure they might be better off holding their fire for now.

One Democratic Senate staffer, who'd prefer two more years in the minority to a narrow majority, notes, "It's the difference between *demanding* a plan for Iraq and having to *unveil* one." In other words, the fear of winning in 2006 is really all about the fear of losing—and the sense that over the next two years the nation still has more to lose. ■

Chuck Todd is the editor in chief of *The Hotline* and an Atlantic contributing editor.

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POLL

WAR IN LEBANON

The Atlantic recently asked a group of foreign-policy authorities about the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah

Q: In the long run, who is likely to benefit the most from the armed conflict between Hezbollah and Israel?

43% IRAN

"Iran staged this operation with Syria's support. The fighting is not in Hezbollah's interest, proving that [the Hezbollah leader Sheikh Hassan] Nasrallah will do what he is told by his state sponsors. This is Iran widening the context of the nuclear negotiation by demonstrating that it is a regional power that can hurt us more than we can hurt it."

"Iran has again demonstrated its ability to export instability well beyond its borders, making clear it is a regionwide player to be reckoned with. It is being empowered by a broader Shiite resurgence, one piece of which is Hezbollah's increased stature and influence. And Tehran, through Hezbollah's challenge to Israel, is taking control of the Islamist 'street.'"

"Iran benefits the most, as it diverts attention from the nuclear issue, undermines the more secular Arab leaders (such as those in Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia), and gives Israel a black eye."

33% HEZBOLLAH

"While Hezbollah's initial attack seemed to widen the division between Sunnis and Shiites, the unrelenting (yet quite ineffective) military campaign by Israel is uniting the Muslim world—Sunni and Shiite—in opposition to Israel, the United States, and the West. Over time, this cannot help but strengthen Iran's position in the region."

"Whatever military [damage] Israel inflicts [on Hezbollah] will be more than compensated by the rise of Hezbollah's stature and power (and especially that of its leader, Hassan Nasrallah) throughout the region."

"All Hezbollah has to do to 'win' is still be standing when the crisis is over."

Other votes: Lebanon (7%), Israel (5%), Syria (5%), radical Islamist groups (5%), Palestine (2%)

Q: Who is likely to lose the most?

32% LEBANON

"Lebanon's efforts to knit together a functioning multi-sectarian society take another blow, while Israel and the United States deliver Hezbollah and Iran a public-relations coup."

"The state will be at risk of collapse."

"Both Lebanon and Israel will lose most—this answer is interlinked. The only way Israel can 'win' is for Lebanon to be a genuine state, with full control of its borders and the factions within them (that means Hezbollah). If Lebanon remains instead an arena for conflict for the other powers in the region, as it has been and now is, Israel will never have a secure northern border. Bombing the hell out of Beirut does not, in the long run, do anything to bring about this strategic change."

26% ISRAEL

"Israel has lost the most, because it has the narrowest of safety margins. Its major loss is the belief, among most of its Arab neighbors and even the United States, in the superiority of Israeli intelligence and military forces and the skill of Israeli diplomacy. The myth of Israeli invincibility is dead ... to be replaced by what? More terrorism, more emboldened enemies, fewer political leaders in the region willing to stand against the voices of violence, and concern about whether the American political leadership will reevaluate its willingness to mortgage American political and economic interests to support a weakened Israel."

25% UNITED STATES

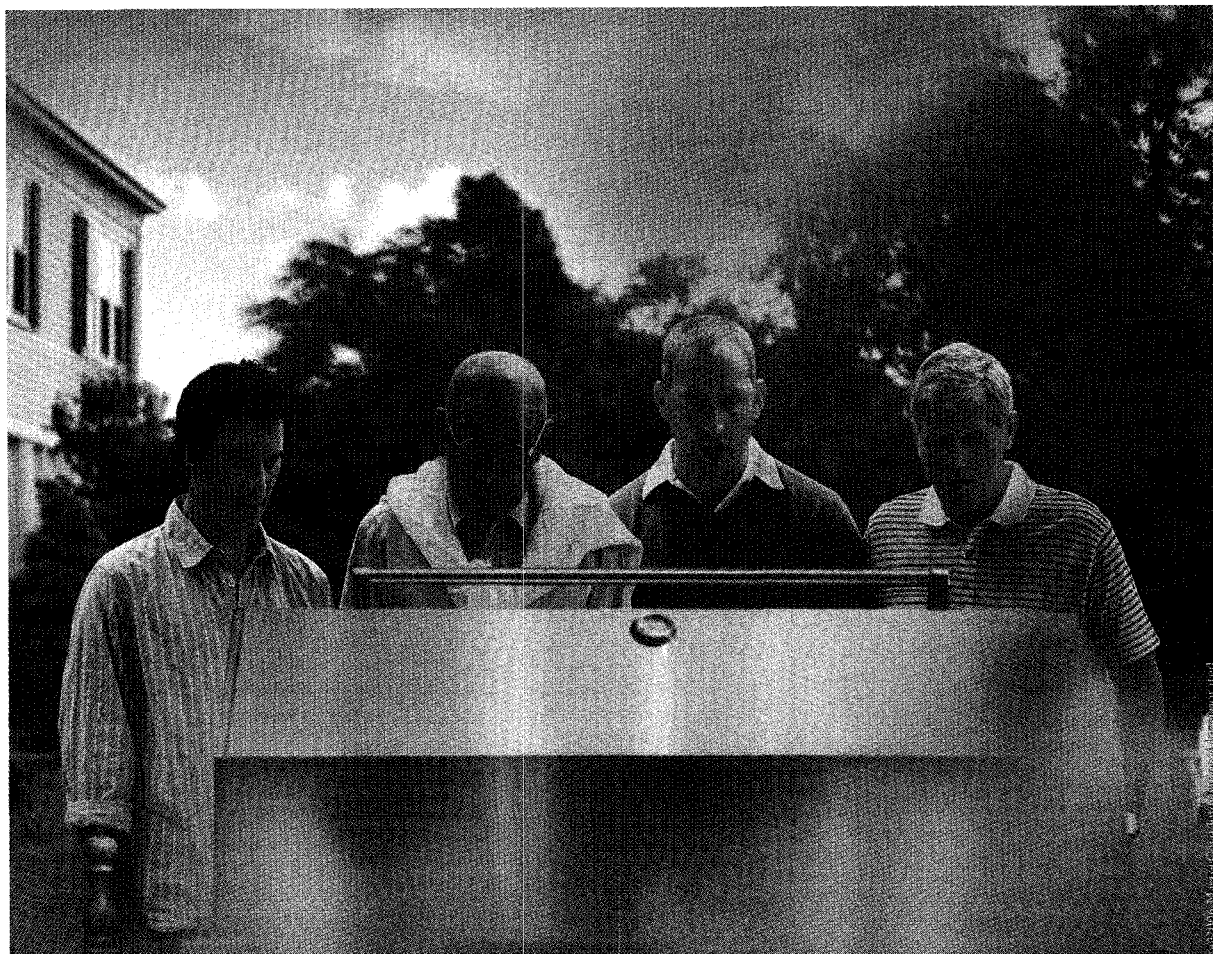
"Like the insurgents' ability in Iraq to challenge the U.S. military, Hezbollah's ability to withstand Israel's onslaught will only embolden terrorists and insurgents everywhere to use these same asymmetric tactics and network strategies against more powerful, conventional military opponents."

"The Bush administration's shortsighted decision to back Israel's ineffective response against Hezbollah has further isolated America from the world. By insisting on its 'us versus them' view of the world, the administration has yet again pursued policies that make more of *them* and fewer of *us*. In the end, by standing alone in the world, America has lost more than anyone else."

Other votes: Hezbollah (10%), Iran (5%), civilians (2%)

PARTICIPANTS (43): Kenneth Adelman, Ronald Asmus, Samuel Berger, Daniel Blumenthal, Stephen Bosworth, Daniel Byman, Warren Christopher, Richard Clarke, Eliot Cohen, Ivo Daalder, James Dobbins, Lawrence Eagleburger, Douglas Feith, John Gaddis, Jay Garner, Leslie Gelb, Marc Grossman, John Hamre, Gary Hart, Bruce Hoffman, John Hulsman, Robert Hunter, Tony Judt, Robert Kagan, David Kay, Andrew Krepinovich, Charles Kupchan, John Lehman, James Lindsay, Edward Luttwak, Jessica Mathews, John McLaughlin, William Nash, Joseph Nye, Carlos Pascual, Thomas Pickering, Kenneth Pollack, Joseph Ralston, Susan Rice, Wendy Sherman, Anne-Marie Slaughter, James Steinberg, Anthony Zinni.

Not all participants answered both questions.



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Primary Sources

Unrest in China; on parking and national character; the importance of being squiggly; our overconfident youth

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

What Would Mao Do?

A wave of social unrest is sweeping across China—in the past two years, the number of public protests has risen by nearly 50 percent—and the government has been “unable or unwilling” to control the eruptions, according to a new report prepared by the Congressional Research Service and obtained by Secrecy News (an online newsletter covering security and intelligence policy). Unlike the Tiananmen Square demonstrations of 1989, or the ongoing struggle between the government and the religious sect Falun Gong, the current protests are driven primarily by economic concerns. Peasants and farmers are unhappy with the environmental degradation, official corruption, and decline in employment and social services that followed the decollectivization of state agriculture, and they are

resisting the government’s attempts to seize property and force evictions for infrastructure projects. More troubling, from Beijing’s point of view, is agitation in the industrial sector, where workers are more educated, enjoy wider access to foreign reporters and rights activists, and have, according to the report, “a greater sense of entitlement.” China’s capitalist tinkering has hurt workers in state companies, where 27.8 million factory jobs were lost between 1999 and 2004; many of the urban protests have been aimed at “collusive agreements between factory managers, local officials, and outside investors.” Some experts anticipate that the government, fearing another of the “color revolutions” that have recently swept Ukraine and Georgia, will begin to take a harder line toward the mounting turmoil.

—“Social Unrest in China,” Thomas Lum, Congressional Research Service

ETHICS

Diplomatic Impunity

What makes officials corrupt? Disentangling law and culture is a tricky business, but a pair of economists have come up with an ingenious way to do it: studying the frequency of parking violations committed by diplomats in New York City. Since, as their study reports, there is “essentially zero legal enforcement of diplomatic parking violations,” the authors hypothesized that any cross-national variation in parking-violation rates should flow from culture alone. And sure enough, diplomats from countries with high levels of corruption were significantly more likely to incur parking tickets, suggesting that cultural factors rather than legal norms drive a great deal of official misconduct. The worst offenders were Kuwaitis, who accumulated an astonishing 246 violations per diplomat per year from the end of 1997 through 2002, followed by Egyptians, with 140 violations per diplomat per year; countries whose diplomats incurred no parking tickets included Canada, Israel, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. The study also found that officials from countries where the U.S. is less popular were much more likely to park illegally,

PARK WHERE YOU PLEASE

Average unpaid annual New York City parking violations per diplomat, November 1997 to November 2002

Country	Violations per diplomat	UN Mission diplomats in 1998
1. Kuwait	246.2	9
2. Egypt	139.6	24
3. Chad	124.3	2
4. Sudan	119.1	7
5. Bulgaria	117.5	6
6. Mozambique	110.7	5
7. Albania	84.5	3
8. Angola	81.7	9
9. Senegal	79.2	11
10. Pakistan	69.4	13

and that there was a significant drop-off in violations after 9/11, particularly among diplomats from Muslim nations.

—“Cultures of Corruption: Evidence From Diplomatic Parking Tickets,” Ray Fisman and Edward Miguel, Columbia University and the University of California at Berkeley

CARTOGRAPHY

Squiggly Fences Make Good Neighbors

It’s long been speculated that when European powers divided up colonial territories based on latitude and longitude rather than ethnic, linguistic, or religious borders—and when postcolonial governments decided to respect those borders instead of drawing new ones—they set the stage for decades of political and economic misery. Now a new study confirms that theory, by examining the correlation between a nation-state’s likelihood of achieving prosperous stability and two variables: whether its borders partition ethnic groups (leading to cross-border strife), and whether its borders follow straight lines or “squiggly” ones (straight borders are “more likely to be artificial”). The study finds that when other variables are controlled for, artificially drawn borders are associated with lower per capita GDP, greater political instability, and poorer quality of life overall.

—“Artificial States,” Alberto Alesina, William Easterly, and Janina Matuszeski, National Bureau of Economic Research

THE WORKPLACE

A Hard Day’s Night

For most of the twentieth century, the typical American workday grew shorter and shorter, and the proportion of American men working long hours dropped steadily. But since 1970, a recent paper points out, this trend has reversed itself: men are working longer hours overall, and the share of men who work more than fifty hours a week has been growing. This trend is most pronounced among highly skilled workers: in 1980, 22 percent of college-educated men routinely pulled fifty-hour workweeks; in 2001, 30.5 percent worked fifty hours or more. Meanwhile, low-paid workers are less likely to work long hours than in the past. The authors argue that this shift reflects a changing approach to compensation, in which companies give their salaried workers financial incentives to persuade them to work longer hours. The authors don’t attempt to explain why companies would be increasingly incentivizing fifty-hour workweeks, but they do note the information industries’ steady appetite for highly skilled workers as a potential source for this shift.

—“The Expanding Workweek? Understanding Trends in Long Work Hours Among U.S. Men, 1979–2004,” Peter Kuhn and Fernando Lozano, National Bureau of Economic Research

YOU MIGHT JUST BECOME A CAR POTATO. IT'S WHAT MAKES A SUBARU, A SUBARU.



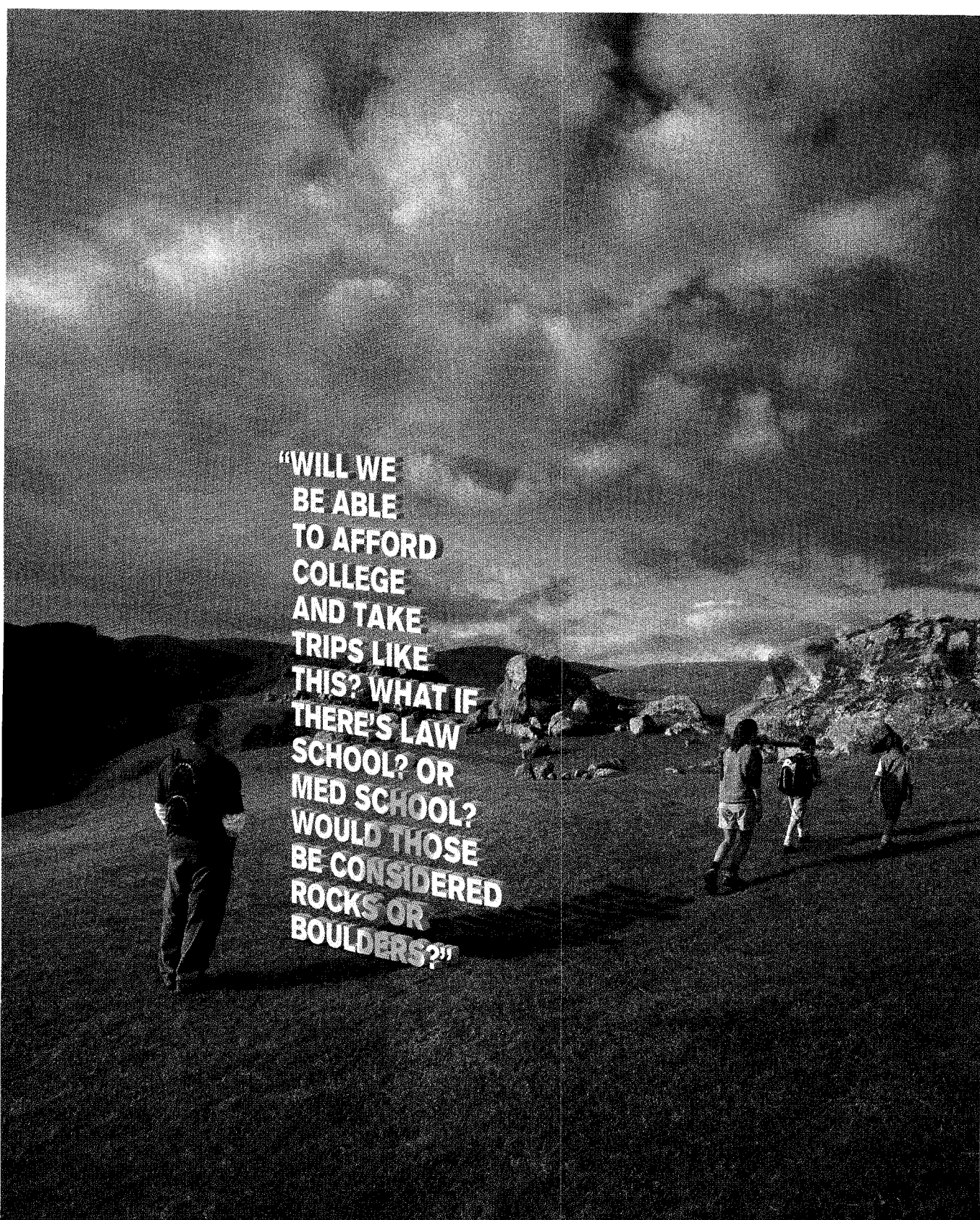
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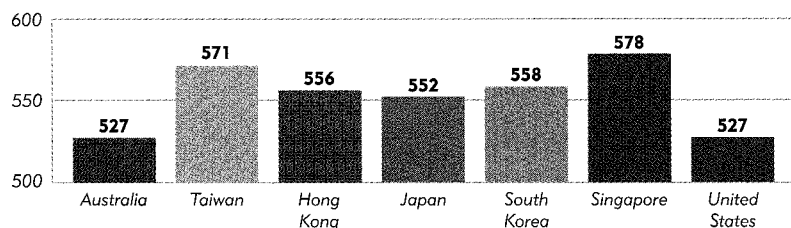
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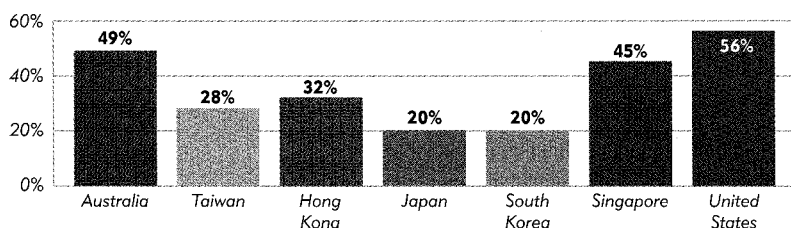
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I THINK I CAN

Average 8th-grade science scores (out of 800 points)



Percentage of 8th-grade science students with high self-confidence in learning science



EDUCATION

The Power of Negative Thinking

Motivational speakers may tell you to believe in yourself, but if you want to do well in school, you may be better off taking a more pessimistic attitude toward your own abilities. In a report detailing the various things the U.S. can learn from the Chinese educational system about teaching math and science—including the importance of national curricular standards, better training of teachers, longer school years, and extra homework—comes the news that the

U.S. lags far behind Asian nations in grade-school math and science scores. This gap, however, is not for want of student self-confidence: despite faring worse on a standardized eighth-grade science test than students in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea, American students are more than twice as likely as their peers in those countries to enjoy high “self-confidence” in their ability to learn science.

—“Math and Science Education in a Global Age: What the U.S. Can Learn From China,” Asia Society

POLITICS

The Rich Are Different From You and Me

What makes a red state red, and a blue state blue? It's the voting habits of their wealthiest residents, according to a study from Columbia University. Although the GOP has traditionally been considered the party of the wealthy and the Democrats the party of the poor, lately Republicans have tended to win in the poorer states in the interior of the country, while Democratic victories have been concentrated in the wealthier states along the East and West Coasts. This trend has led pundits to argue that the Republicans have developed a common touch, while the Democrats have become elitist and alienated from the masses—but actually, the study's authors argue, the red-blue gap is best explained by the fact that rich people in poor states are much

more likely to vote Republican than rich people in well-off states. In Mississippi, for example, there is a strong relationship between income and voting patterns: the wealthier the Mississippian, the more likely he or she is to pull the lever for a Republican presidential candidate. But as a state's average income rises, the correlation between being wealthy and voting Republican disappears. In Connecticut, for instance, there is almost no connection between income and voting behavior: both the poor and the rich tend to vote for Democratic candidates.

—“Rich State, Poor State, Red State, Blue State: What's the Matter With Connecticut?” A. Gelman, B. Shor, J. Bafumi, and D. Park, Columbia University

For links to the documents discussed in these pages, visit www.theatlantic.com/doc/200610/primarysources.

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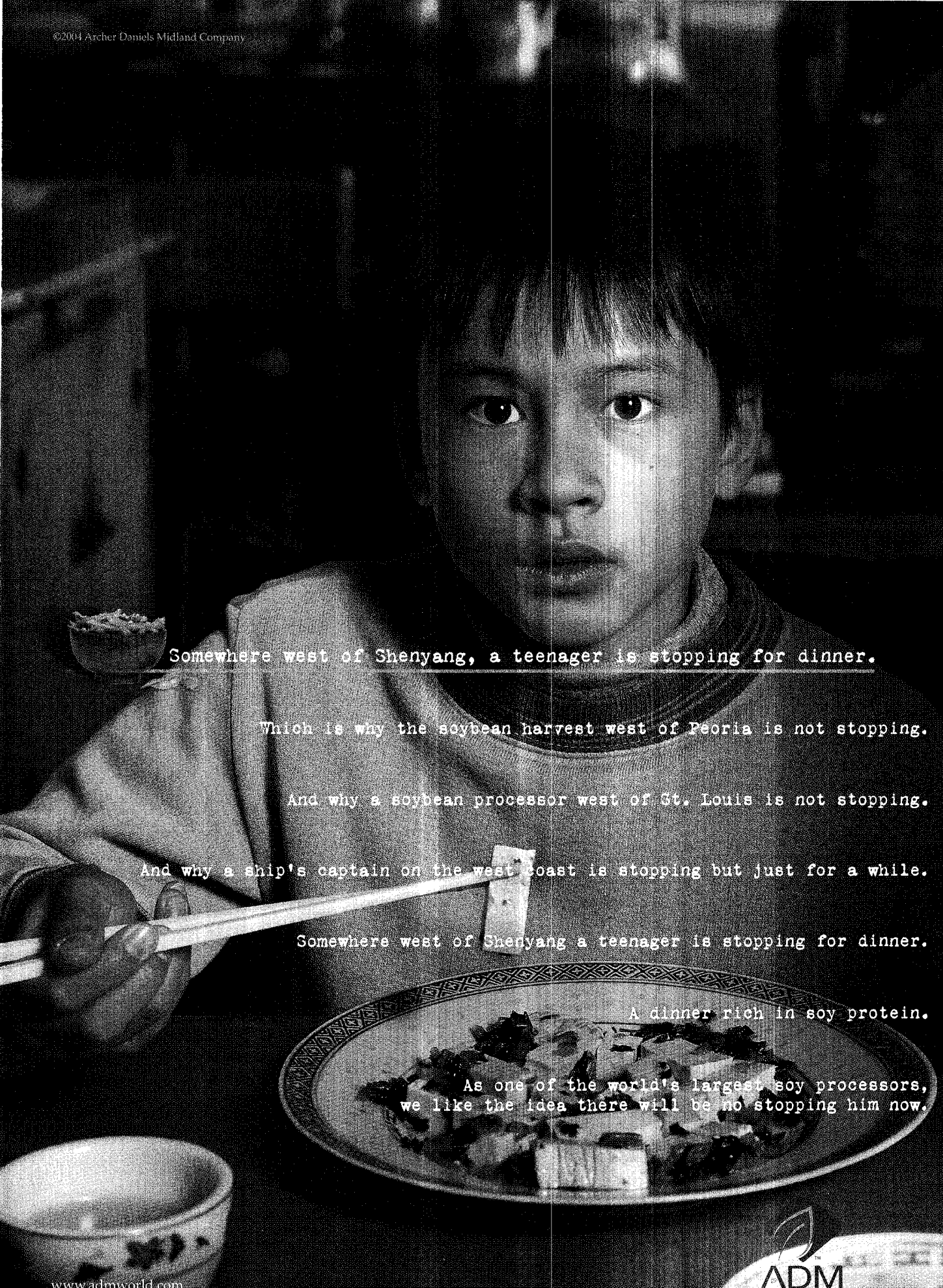


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Somewhere west of Shenyang, a teenager is stopping for dinner.

Which is why the soybean harvest west of Peoria is not stopping.

And why a soybean processor west of St. Louis is not stopping.

And why a ship's captain on the west coast is stopping but just for a while.

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EXCERPTS FROM

the ASPEN IDEAS FESTIVAL

For the second year, The Atlantic and the Aspen Institute collaborated in July to host the Aspen Ideas Festival, which gathers scientists, politicians, entrepreneurs, religious figures, and others for a week of conversation and debate. Participants contribute provocative ideas from their fields, and discuss the world, both as it is and as it might become. Following are some excerpts from this year's discussion.



DAVID M. KENNEDY
on the military and
American democracy

In a Fourth of July debate about the state of American democracy, Kennedy, a historian at Stanford, suggested that war making was becoming too easy for American policy makers.

Today's all-volunteer force numbers 1.4 million ... and about 900,000 in the Reserves. The active forces today proportionate to population are [1]-125th the size of the force that we deployed in World War II. Moreover, thanks to the advances in technology ... that extremely small force, measured by historical standards, is extraordinarily lethal ...

The total Defense Department budget today, including the expenditures for Afghanistan and Iraq, is less than 4 percent of GDP—one-tenth of what this economy had to deliver to win World War II. Now what this means in effect is that our society can now deploy history's most lethal military force without breaking a sweat, without making any very deep demands on our manpower pool or the size of our economy. And this, to me, raises very, very serious questions about political accountability and [the] lowering of the threshold for the executive to employ military force without having to engage the deep and durable engagement and agreement of the citizenry at large ...

Another asymmetry of very troubling proportions, it seems to me, is [in] the nature of today's armed forces; 42 percent of today's Army enlistees are ethnic or racial minorities—42 percent. In the general population in the eighteen-to-twenty-four-year-old age cohort, nearly 50 percent of people ... have had some exposure to college education. In that same cohort in the U.S. military today ... the percentage of people who've had some kind [of] exposure to college education is 6.5 percent. So ... the vast majority of our society ... has in effect hired some of the least advantaged of our fellow citizens to conduct some of our most dangerous business. And I think that is an unstable situation, and one that does threaten, in the long run, the health of our democracy.



JOHN ALDERDICE
on the psychology and
politics of terrorism

Alderdice, a politician in Northern Ireland and a psychiatrist, argued that the underlying psychology of terrorism often reflects thwarted desires for respect.

And, perhaps one of the most moving things ... was when Martin McGuinness [the Irish Republican Army leader] started talking about what he'd really, really wanted to do when he was a little boy. He wanted to be a motor mechanic. More than anything else, he wanted to

fix cars. And when he was sixteen and he had finished up at school, he didn't go on to do his later exams; he went to the local garage and he said, "I'd like a job." And the guy says, "Don't have a job for you, son." He said, "No, no, I understand you might not have a job. But just, you know, keep me in mind, and when a job comes up—you know." He says, "Look, son, you don't understand. I'm never going to employ you. You're a Catholic."

But that wasn't the really striking bit. The really striking bit was when Martin McGuinness said, "You know, I sometimes wonder: If I got that job, would I ever have got involved in all the things I got involved in subsequently?" Now, for a man who not only runs Sinn Féin but runs the IRA, that is a big statement, a very striking statement.

And what does it say? It says that it's not about whether he got money for being employed as a mechanic, that it would have kept him from getting involved in paramilitarism. It was the humiliation and the disrespect—that was what was absolutely critical.



BILL JOY
on the Internet and
education

Joy, the cofounder of Sun Microsystems, dismissed the suggestion that the online communities formed around Internet games and LiveJournal pages could provide an educational boost for America's young people.

This all ... sounds like a gigantic waste of time. If I was competing with the United States, I would love to have the students I was competing with spending their time on this kind of crap ... [P]eople are fooling themselves that they're being creative in these spaces ... [T]he standard of creativity in the world, to be competitive and be a great designer, is very hard: you have to go to school; you have to apprentice; you have to do hard things. It's not about, your friends like something you did. So I think this is setting a false expectation: you can create your own island and people come to it in a video game ... and I don't see any correlation between that and what it's gonna take to be a designer and have a skill set to succeed in the world. So I go back to what I said before: we're amusing ourselves to death; there are good uses of this technology, and I don't see this as a good use of the technology ...

[T]he real problem is, by democratizing speech and the ability to post, we've lost the gradation for quality. The gradation of quality was always based on the fact that words had weight—it cost money to move them around. So there was back pressure against ... junk ...

[U]ltimately, not everyone can have a million readers, because all the readers have run out of time. So it's a false promise to people, that they can get the big audience. Because in the end—once [you've] gotten to the years when you've got a job, you've gotta raise your kids—you're not gonna have time for this.



SHASHI THAROOR
on terrorism

Tharoor, a candidate to be the next UN secretary-general, argued that it would be a mistake for the United States to allow its foreign policy to be defined by the war on terrorism.

I think it would be tragically self-limiting. I think the U.S. has far bigger and larger issues in the world that it needs to be concerned with. I believe this issue remains vital. I believe that all the instruments of state that are being

applied to prevent the next 9/11—and to take action against those who might one day attempt to perpetrate it—are indispensable and must continue, but it would be a shame if the U.S. and its posture in the world were limited to this one thing alone. The U.S. stands for far more in the world than resistance to terror ... I think you are far too [great] a country to be defined merely by the enemies you seek to fight.



SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR
on judicial independence

The retired Supreme Court justice decried the increasing criticism of judges, and the attempts by legislatures to exert control over the judicial process.

I've lived a long time now. And in my lifetime, I've never seen such very alert criticism of judges as I have seen in the last few years. And we've seen proposals, both in Congress and in state legislatures, that are very surprising in terms of proposing specific action in retaliation against judges who make a decision ... which the legislator doesn't like ... such as impeachment of any federal judge who might cite an opinion of a foreign court, or the appointment of inspectors general for judges to make sure they didn't make a trip to Aspen that was paid for by somebody, and provisions to cut the budgets of federal courts in retaliation for certain decisions ...

We have a proposal in South Dakota, you may have read about, to change the constitution in that state to remove judicial immunity for actions by judges, jurors, and witnesses in cases and to allow disgruntled litigants to then sue the judges, jurors, and witnesses—and even put them in jail, if need be. It's called JAIL 4 Judges ...

I hear clapping for JAIL 4 Judges. Well, maybe so. But my concern is that the Framers of our Constitution thought it was of critical, critical importance, in establishing three branches of government, that we have an independent judiciary, at least at the federal level; and all the states copied that model. Their thought was that without that,

the provisions of the Constitution ... couldn't be enforced.

And look back in history. For instance, the decision of the Supreme Court in the 1950s, which was unanimous at the time, to strike down segregated public schools, schools segregated on the basis of race. That was a very unpopular decision in many parts of this country. If judges had consulted public opinion ... we would still be operating with segregated schools.



ROB RIEMEN
on kitsch and the crisis of the West

Riemen, a Dutch intellectual, argued that the West is in the grip of a cultural crisis, driven by relativism and subjectivity, that threatens to swamp us with kitsch.

Now, imagine a society in which we ignore the best, in which there is no longer a place for those spiritual absolute values, in which ... there is no longer a place for a kind of spiritual identity. The very first characteristic is that, by definition, you get a total subjectivity because nothing is absolute. So everything is immediately reduced to my individual self or your individual self ... It's about how I feel, who I am, what my feelings are. It's total[ly] ego centered ... And you also get a kind of noncritical attitude—that's to say, you have to respect my taste, and that this is my opinion ... And these are my emotions, so please respect them ...

In this total subjectivity, and with this lack of spiritual identity, the next consequence—again, by definition—is that an identity becomes completely [dependent] on material things. And so here is where all those yelling advertisements [come] in and are telling us, "You cannot be this or that if you don't buy this car. And you cannot be this or that if you don't buy this watch. And you cannot be this or that if you don't go on holiday to that place," and so on and so forth. So, literally, an identity is something you can buy ...

[R]eligion is ... about uplifting my religious feelings—I want to be in harmony, I want to be in peace with myself,

THAROOR: DAN BEYER; O'CONNOR, RIEMEN: MICHAEL BRANDS

I want to be in peace with nature, I want peace, blah, blah, blah. But it is not the encounter with God ... [I]f you still have the Bible, you can go to the Old Testament, read a little bit about the prophets. They had an encounter with God, and they can tell you, it's not a very pleasant one.

Part of the total subjectivity is also that if I'm the measure of everything, then also—by definition—everything can mean anything, right? So language is no longer the transmission of truth and meaning, but it literally becomes chatter, it becomes talk. And here is where we get our talk shows, right? ...

What will happen to art? Art is still important to us, but not as a value in itself, but as ... a good investment, [a] kind of commodity. Relationships, also ... No real friendship is any longer possible, because the intrinsic value of friendship no longer [exists]. It's all about mutual interest ...

What you get is the total utilitarian society. It's all about economics, what is measurable, and material values.



**JACQUELINE
NOVOGRATZ**
on interconnectedness

Novogratz, the CEO of the Acumen Fund, a nonprofit venture-capital fund that helps deliver health care, housing, and water in the developing world, described an experience that inspired her to become involved with development work.

I want to end with another idea, which I hadn't thought about [discussing] until right now, which is our interconnectedness ... [T]he reason I really got into the work I'm doing goes back to a story ... of when I was twelve years old, and my uncle Ed gave me a blue sweater that had animals crossing in the front of it and mountains on the top of it, and I loved the sweater; I wore it all the time.

And one day when I was fourteen and my adolescent body was filling it out in a slightly different way ... Matthew Mussolino, who was my nemesis in high school, said to me, in a voice that everybody could hear, a

really lewd comment, which made me go home and throw the sweater away immediately, asking my mother how I could ever possibly have worn it. And we put it in the Goodwill, and I promptly forgot about it.

About twelve years later I was jogging in the hills of Kigali, Rwanda, and about twenty feet in front of me I saw a little boy wearing my sweater. And I thought, you know, it couldn't be. [So I] ran up to him—and I'm quite an excitable person—and grabbed the child, turned over the collar, and sure enough, there was my name, [on] his sweater, thousands of miles away and more than a decade.



T. D. JAKES
on education

Jakes, the influential televangelist and author, talked about the unique role that churches can play in promoting prosperity and education among African Americans.

Education has not been marketed well to young people. We have not made it look fun to be smart. Today, young people have been sidetracked by [the] marketing of music and movies and everything else, but education has no marketing strategy. If we were running a regular business, a regular corporation, you wouldn't provide a great product for which you had no marketing.

We need to find a way that we applaud and celebrate, not only ... America's best singer but ... America's brightest student.



BILL CLINTON
on America's image
in the world

The former president spoke about what the United States could do to burnish its reputation overseas, and argued that foreigners need to feel that America is on their side.

First of all, I think we have to realize ... as long as we're in the position we're in, or even when others may

acquire some greater parity with us on a military ... economic [or] political plane ... There will always be times when we will be making decisions that some people won't agree with ... [B]ut they need to think that in general we wish them well, and that we are trying to take the world to a place where everybody on earth has a chance to live their dreams and to pursue their faith and to preserve their culture and to make a decent living ...

I remember once I was in Sri Lanka, talking to one of the parliamentary leaders of the Tamil Tigers. And we had them on the terrorist list the whole time I was president. And he said, "You know, you had us on the terrorist list the whole time you were president, but I liked you anyway." And I said, "You did?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because I always figured that you wanted my people to have a fair break here, that you thought that Hindus should be treated fairly." Now, I don't mean to be self-serving ... that's the first thing that came on my mind. But the point is ... you want people to admire and not to resent America. And when they disagree with us, you want them to disagree with us in the way you have a disagreement within your family or your business ... You want them to think, basically, we are the good guys on the right side of the history, and we are pulling for them ...

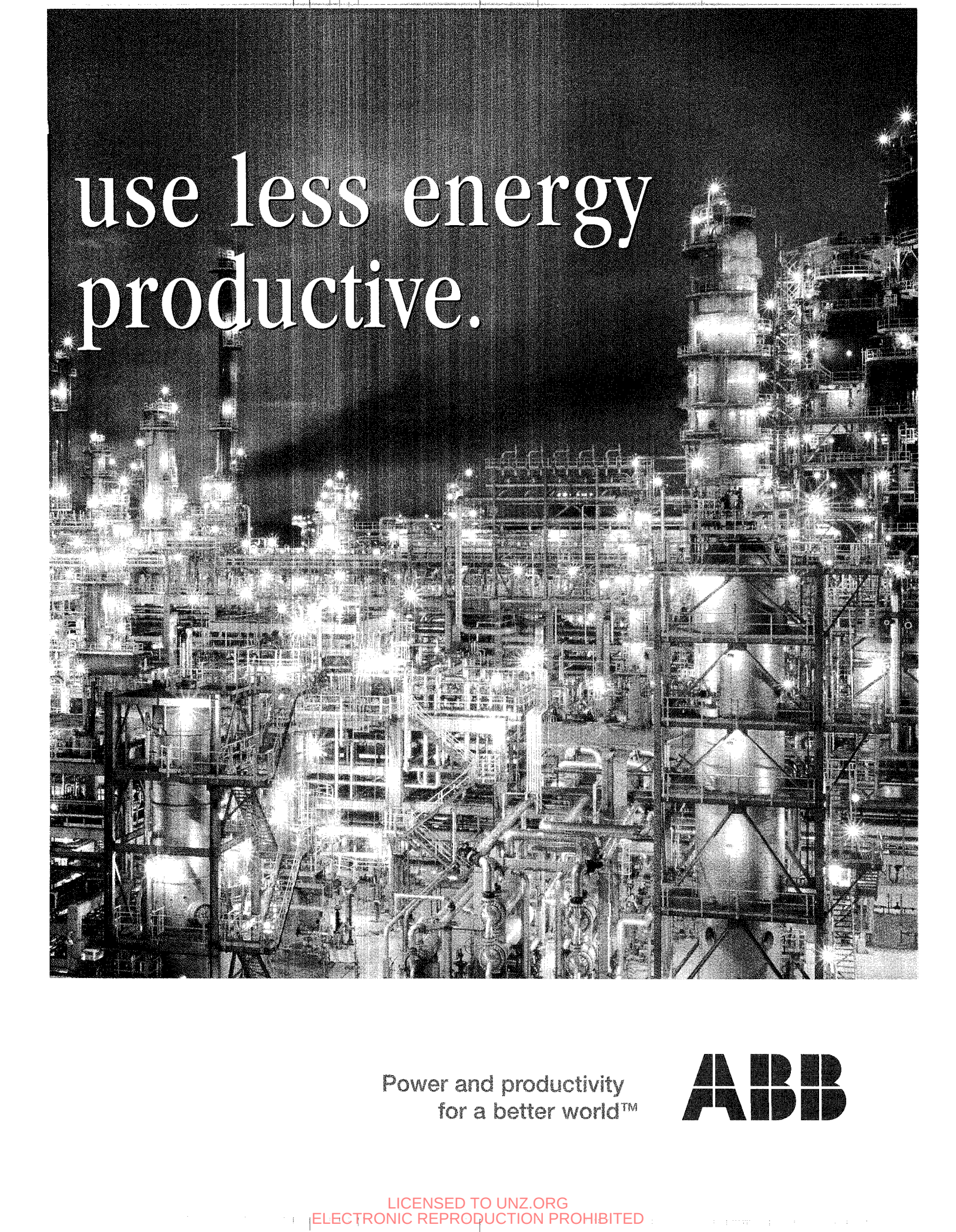
There are two Muslim countries where our standing is better than it was a couple of years ago, and they are both important: one, the largest, Indonesia, and the other, the most troublesome, Pakistan, because it's home to so many Taliban and al-Qaeda sympathizers—and the reasons are the tsunami and the earthquake ... I saw this myself. When former President Bush and I took our first [trip] over to the tsunami area ... we visited [these] little kids, and part of their therapy—if they had lost their families during the tsunami—was to draw pictures of what they saw. Picture after picture after picture: American military helicopters dropping food, not bombs, dropping ladders to get people out of isolated places.



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KARL ROVE
on immigration

Rove, the White House deputy chief of staff, made a plea for a system attuned to the realities of immigration, the struggles faced by immigrants, and the promise of American life.

We are working hard on getting control of the borders. But we cannot get control of our borders until we do something about ... a man or woman who is making fifty cents an hour in Mexico and can make ten bucks an hour in the United States, for a job that Americans will not do; until we have a system that allows them to come here. We don't have enough people to stand across the bottom of the border and stop them. We just don't ...

Every bit of evidence we have is that people do not come here in order to stay in America ... But we are making it so difficult to get here that what happens is ... you scrape together the money to get across the border, you get across the border, you get a job ... you can't go home. [It's too] tough to get back and forth. His little sister gets married, he can't go home, it's too difficult to get back and cross the border ... can't go home for holidays, can't go home for family. You wake up, you've been here for five or ten years, and you say, "I've got no connection in that dusty little town in the interior of Mexico. I am staying."

Who should be surprised at that? What we ought to have is a system that allows him to keep those personal connections, to travel back and forth across the border freely during the time that they are in the United States legally ...

Let me say one more thing: there are a lot of really good people who are scared to death about immigration, and we shouldn't be surprised about it. First of all, because it always happens. I've been reading sort of the pre-Civil War history, and boy, talk about—you know, the Mexicans in those days were the Irish ... You should hear what politicians in the Midwest said about [us] Norwegians when we were coming in:

"root eaters." I mean ... they didn't like us. This happens, and I understand that. But ... we are a great country and have been able to assimilate people from all kinds of backgrounds, from all parts of the world, because we've emphasized a shared language, a common tradition ... Look, with all ... respect, there's no Filipino dream, there's no Japanese dream, there's no Italian dream. But there is an American dream. And some guy standing on a street corner in Addis Ababa knows what it is about.



MADELEINE ALBRIGHT
on diplomacy

The former secretary of state called for dialogue—if indirect—with America's enemies.

I don't believe that we are involved in a clash of civilizations. But I do believe that we are involved in a battle of ideas. And that is a very important distinction, because it requires us to really put forward what we believe in and engage in a dialogue.

Now, when President Ahmadinejad wrote to President Bush, it was a horrible letter, and I never thought that President Bush and [the] president of Iran should become pen pals. But I do think, if you look at the letter, in addition to all of the terrible language and saber rattling, there were some very important points—about social justice, about America's role, a variety of issues.

And even as I was at the rather peculiar meeting we had at the White House, between the president and the "former people," as I call us ... I did suggest to the president that somebody at a very high level needed to give a speech to respond to what was in that letter.



DANA GIOIA
on awakening to art

Gioia, a poet and the chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, discussed his boyhood introduction to art.

My mother ... was the daughter of Mexican immigrants in a working class, never had much education, but she loved poetry. And she had been educated in the public-school system at a time when they still made people memorize poems, and her own father had liked poetry—he was a vaquero. And so she had all these poems by heart.

And I think my earliest awakening—in an ugly, poor neighborhood in Los Angeles—to what art was, was just to hear my mother recite these things. For years I didn't understand that sometimes by reciting them, she was telling me something about her life she couldn't tell me directly; she was expressing the sorrows of her life, in a way.

But the poem of hers that I remember most vividly her reciting was "Annabel Lee." And I just hear,

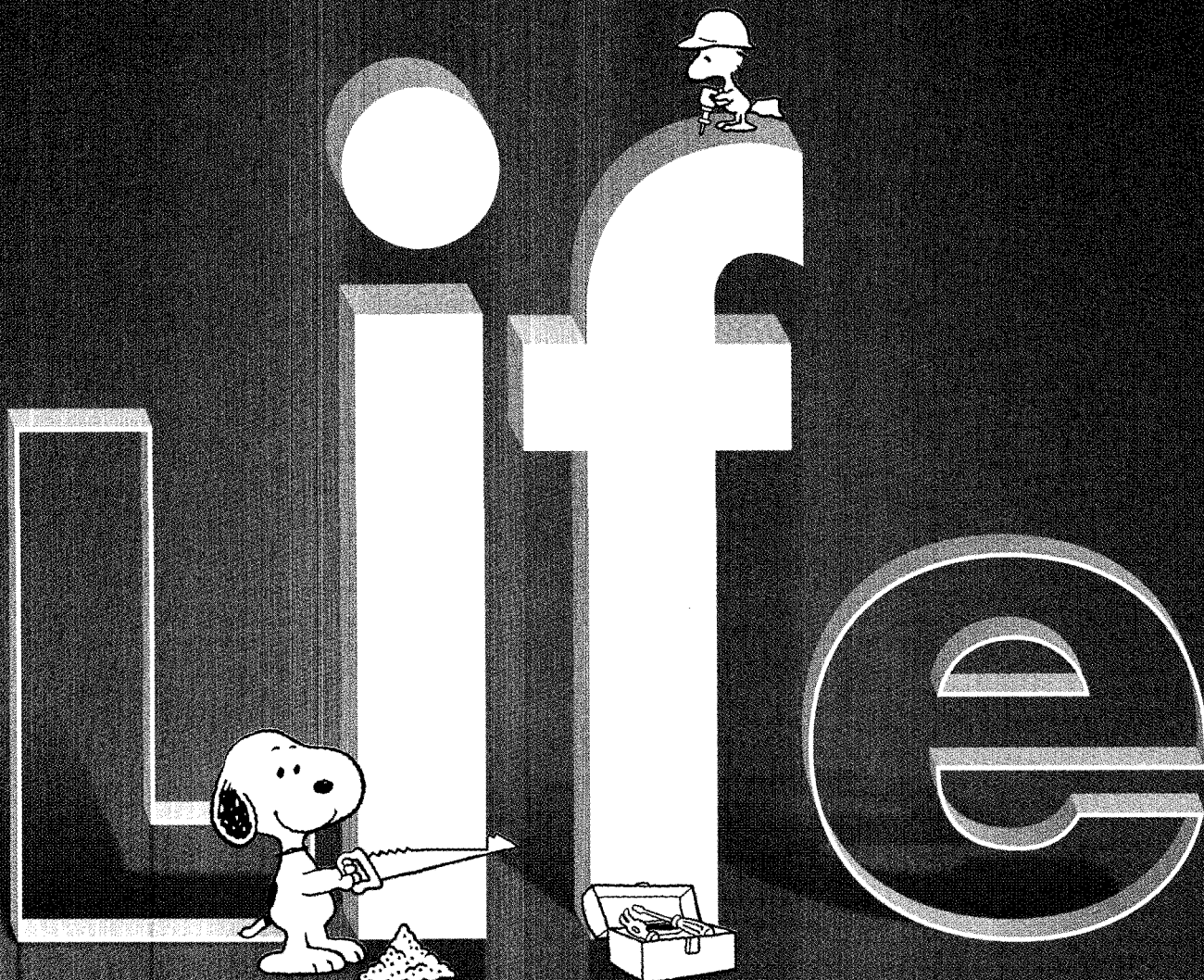
It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom
you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee ...

And this opened up ... a kind of hunger on one hand, and an awareness on the other, that probably took me twenty, thirty years to understand ... But I realized right away ... that beauty kind of stopped me dead in my tracks. I mean, the nun would play a record of Chopin, and everybody else would be poking each other with pencils, and I would be there like [sound of rapt awe].

And so, I knew that I wanted to go wherever this stuff was. There was no signpost in my neighborhood; there was nobody who'd gone to college or did this. And so in my own way I kind of groped, over the next ten to fifteen years, largely through music, which is the only art that the poor are offered training in, in this country. And ... I became first a musician (I wanted to become a composer), and then I eventually became a poet.

But it seems to me it's that awakening to the full potential of what your life might be—beyond the possibilities your own family, your own class, your own race, your own neighborhood gives you—which is one of the great human gifts that art affords. ▀

MICHAEL BRANDS



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Politics

This is the ninth in a series of archival excerpts in honor of the magazine's 150th anniversary. This installment is introduced by James Bennet, the editor of The Atlantic.



TO TRACK THE MEANING of American democracy through *The Atlantic's* archives is to be reminded how slippery, but strong, it has always been. No one, of course, rejects the principle trumpeted by Ralph Waldo Emerson at the outset of these selections that "Emancipation is the demand of civilization." (What American would go on record trashing freedom?) But succeeding thinkers voice unease about just how to put it into action.

Woodrow Wilson wonders if democratic government, as established, can cope with entropic times, when "voters of every blood and environment and social derivation mix and stare at one another at the same voting places." Walter Lippmann sniffs at "the prevailing public opinion," worrying over how to strengthen "the judgments of informed and responsible officials." But both men were writing when, from our standpoint, civilization's demand for emancipation had not remotely been met. Wilson wrote when women had not yet gotten the right to vote, and Lippmann when blacks were still blocked from exercising that right, ninety years after the liberation that Emerson dreamed of. Indeed, Jack Kennedy had yet to demonstrate that a white and male—but

Catholic—candidate could overcome the prejudice that the Happy Warrior, Alfred E. Smith, so powerfully inveighed against in 1927.

Looking backward, Isaiah Berlin sees in Roosevelt's New Deal the right balance between state power and personal freedom, the reconciliation of "individual liberty and a loose texture of society with the indispensable minimum of organization and authority." But less than twenty years later, another friend of the New Deal, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., fears that executive power under a Republican administration has run amok, resulting in "the imperial presidency." A thread running through all these selections is the view—still a commonplace of American politics—that those charged with implementing the noblest American ideals are not quite up to the job. Wilson worries that democracy anoints "petty men of no ambition," while P. J. O'Rourke contends that politicians are mostly "just ridiculous people"—and therefore justly representative of their constituents.

Our present representative in chief, George W. Bush, declared in his second inaugural address, "Freedom is the permanent hope of mankind." We may well hear a meaningful echo there of Emerson's declaration of 144 years ago. Still, as the archives suggest, and as Mr. Bush's efforts abroad have demonstrated, summoning the lofty sentiment—while important—is the easy part. —JAMES BENNET

For the full text of these articles, visit www.theatlantic.com/ideastour.

AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

April 1862

BY RALPH WALDO EMERSON

....

As the Civil War ground on, and the fate of the young nation hung in the balance, Ralph Waldo Emerson argued vehemently for a federal emancipation of the slaves. "Morality," above all else, he asserted, "is the object of government." He lauded President Lincoln for his principled moves in that direction.

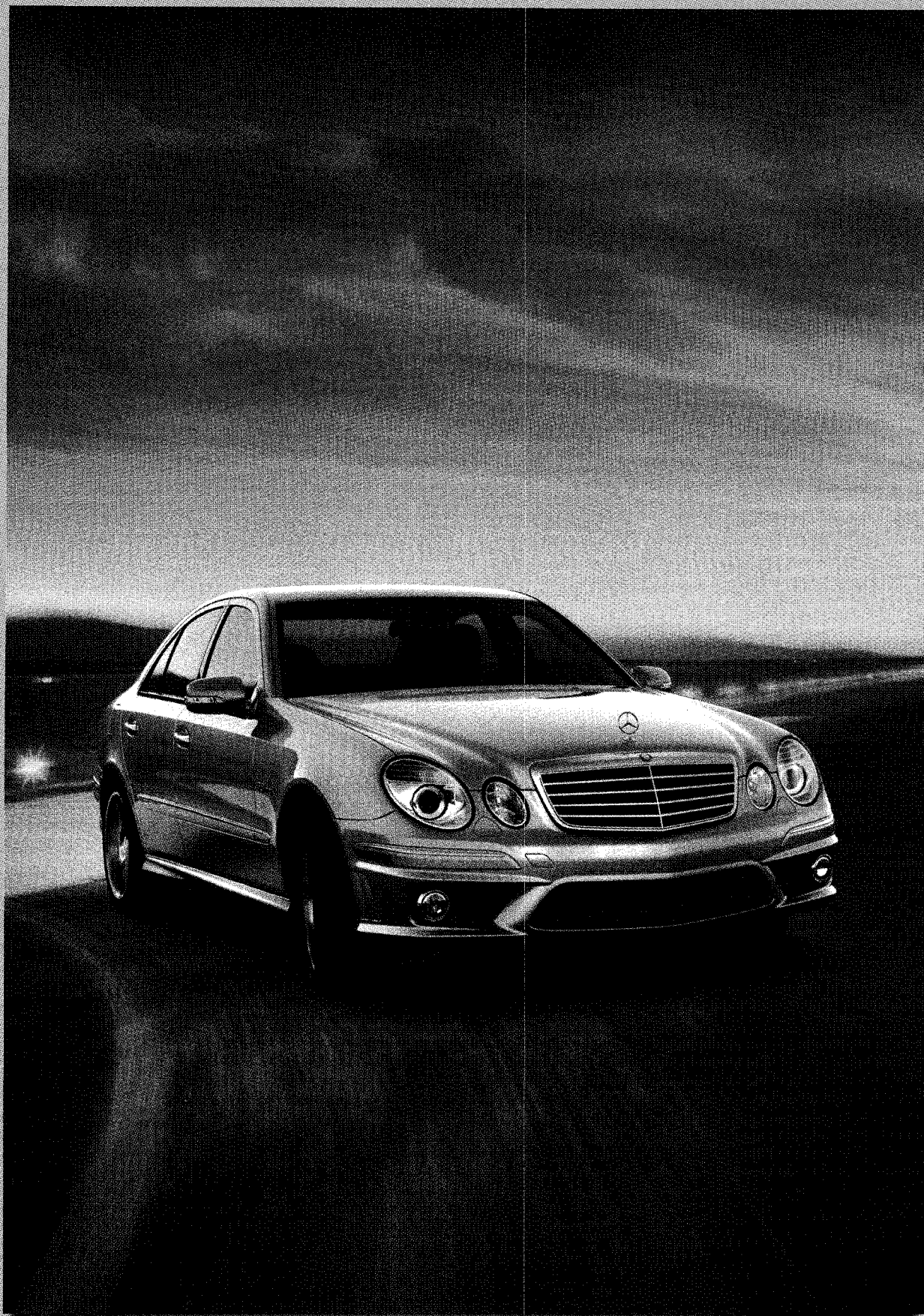
Emancipation is the demand of civilization. That is a principle; everything else is an intrigue ...

The end of all political struggle is to establish morality as the basis of all legislation. It is not free institutions, 't is not a republic, 't is not a democracy, that is the end—no, but only the means. Morality is the object of

government. We want a state of things in which crime shall not pay. This is the consolation on which we rest in the darkness of the future and the afflictions of to-day, that the government of the world is moral, and does forever destroy what is not ...

President Lincoln has proposed to Congress that the Government shall coöperate with any State that shall enact a gradual abolishment of Slavery. In the recent series of national successes, this Message is the best. It marks the happiest day in the political year. The American Executive ranges itself for the first time on the side of freedom. If Congress has been backward, the President has advanced. This state-paper is the more interesting that it appears to be the President's individual act, done under a strong sense of duty. He speaks his own thought in his own style. All thanks and honor to the Head of the State!

Volume 9, No. 54, pp. 502–511



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DEMOCRACY AND EFFICIENCY

March 1901

BY WOODROW WILSON

....

At the turn of the twentieth century, future President Woodrow Wilson—then a political-science professor at Princeton—explained that America's governing structures had served their purpose well throughout the nation's early years, but that the time had come for them to become more sophisticated, in order to cope with a burgeoning population and the growing complexities of modern life.

Tocqueville predicted the stability of the government of the United States, not because of its intrinsic excellence, but because of its suitability to the particular social, economic, and political conditions of the people and the country for whose use and administration it had been framed . . . Democracy was with us, he perceived, already a thing of principle and custom and nature, and our institutions admirably expressed our training and experience . . .

During the first half century of our national life we seemed to have succeeded in an extraordinary degree in approaching our ideal, in organizing a nation for counsel and cooperation, and in moving forward with cordial unison and with confident and buoyant step toward the accomplishment of tasks and duties upon which all were agreed. Our later life has disclosed serious flaws . . .

We printed the *SELF* large and the *government* small in almost every administrative arrangement we made; and that is still our attitude and preference.

We have found that even among ourselves such arrangements are not universally convenient or serviceable. They give us untrained officials, and an expert civil service is almost unknown amongst us. They give us petty officials, petty men of no ambition, without hope or fitness for advancement. They give us so many elective offices that even the most conscientious voters have neither the time nor the opportunity to inform themselves with regard to every candidate on their ballots, and must vote for a great many men of whom they know nothing. They give us, consequently, the local machine and the local boss; and where population crowds, interests compete, work moves strenuously and at haste, life is many-sided and without unity and voters of every blood and environment and social-derivation mix and stare at one another at the same voting places, government miscarries . . . Methods of electoral choice and administrative organization, which served us admirably well while the nation was homogeneous and rural, serve us oftentimes ill enough now that the nation is heterogeneous and crowded into cities . . .

Leadership and expert organization have become imperative, and our practical sense, never daunted hitherto, must be applied to the task of developing them at once and with a will.

Volume 87, No. 521, pp. 289-299

CATHOLIC AND PATRIOT

May 1927

BY ALFRED E. SMITH

....

In 1927, Alfred E. Smith, New York's governor and the first Roman Catholic to run for president, argued against the charge that a Catholic could not, in good conscience, fulfill his duties to his country. Though he lost the election the following year to Herbert Hoover, his candidacy helped pave the way for John F. Kennedy thirty-two years later.

Charles C. Marshall, Esq.

Dear Sir:—

In your open letter to me in the April *Atlantic Monthly* you 'impute' to American Catholics views which, if held by them, would leave open to question the loyalty and devotion to this country and its Constitution of more than twenty million American Catholic citizens. I am grateful to you for defining this issue in the open and for your courteous expression of the satisfaction it will bring to my fellow citizens for me to give 'a disclaimer of the convictions' thus imputed. Without mental reservation I can and do make that disclaimer. These convictions are held neither by me nor by any other American Catholic, as far as I know . . .

I should be a poor American and a poor Catholic alike if I injected religious discussion into a political campaign. Therefore I would ask you to accept this answer from me not as a candidate for any public office but as an American citizen, honored with high elective office, meeting a challenge to his patriotism and his intellectual integrity . . .

I summarize my creed as an American Catholic. I believe in the worship of God according to the faith and practice of the Roman Catholic Church. I recognize no power in the institutions of my Church to interfere with the operations of the Constitution of the United States or the enforcement of the law of the land. I believe in absolute freedom of conscience for all men and in equality of all churches, all sects, and all beliefs before the law as a matter of right and not as a matter of favor. I believe in the absolute separation of Church and State and in the strict enforcement of the provisions of the Constitution that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. I believe that no tribunal of any church has any power to make any decree of any force in the law of the land, other than to establish the status of its own communicants . . . And I believe in the common brotherhood of man under the common fatherhood of God.

In this spirit I join with fellow Americans of all creeds in a fervent prayer that never again in this land will any public servant be challenged because of the faith in which he has tried to walk humbly with his God.

Very truly yours,

Alfred E. Smith

Volume 139, No. 5, pp. 721-728

THE DECLINE OF WESTERN DEMOCRACY

February 1955

BY WALTER LIPPMANN

....

In the wake of two devastating world wars, and with the specter of communism looming, Walter Lippmann fretted that Western democracies were becoming too beholden to an ill-informed and frequently "destructively wrong" mass of public opinion.

There has developed in this century a functional derangement of the relationship between the mass of the people and the government. The people have acquired power which they are incapable of exercising, and the governments they elect have lost powers which they must recover if they are to govern ...

The unhappy truth is that the prevailing public opinion has been destructively wrong at the critical junctures. The people have imposed a veto upon the judgments of informed and responsible officials. They have compelled the governments, which usually knew what would have been wiser ... Mass opinion has acquired mounting power in this century. It has shown itself to be a dangerous master ...

There have been men worth listening to who warned the people against their mistakes. Always, too, there have been men inside the governments who judged correctly because they were permitted to know in time the uncensored and unvarnished truth. But the climate of modern democracy does not usually inspire them to speak out ...

With exceptions so rare that they are regarded as miracles and freaks of nature, successful democratic politicians are insecure and intimidated men. They advance politically only as they placate, appease, bribe, seduce, bamboozle, or otherwise manage to manipulate the demanding and threatening elements in their constituencies. The decisive consideration is not whether the proposition is good but whether it is popular—not whether it will work well and prove itself but whether the active, talking constituents like it immediately. Politicians rationalize this servitude by saying that in a democracy public men are the servants of the people.

Volume 195, No. 2, pp. 29–36

ROOSEVELT THROUGH EUROPEAN EYES

July 1955

BY ISAIAH BERLIN

....

In 1955, the philosopher and historian Isaiah Berlin paid tribute to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, whose New Deal policies, Berlin contended, had forever "altered the fundamental concept of government and its obligations to the governed."

When I say that some men occupy one's imagination for many years, this is literally true of Mr. Roosevelt's effect on the young men of my own generation in England, and probably in many parts of Europe, and indeed the entire world. If one was young in the thirties and lived in a democracy, then, whatever one's politics, if one had human feelings at all, or the faintest spark of social idealism, or any love of life, one must have felt very much as young men in Continental Europe probably felt after the defeat of Napoleon during the years of the Restoration: that all was dark and quiet, a great reaction was abroad, and little stirred, and nothing resisted ...

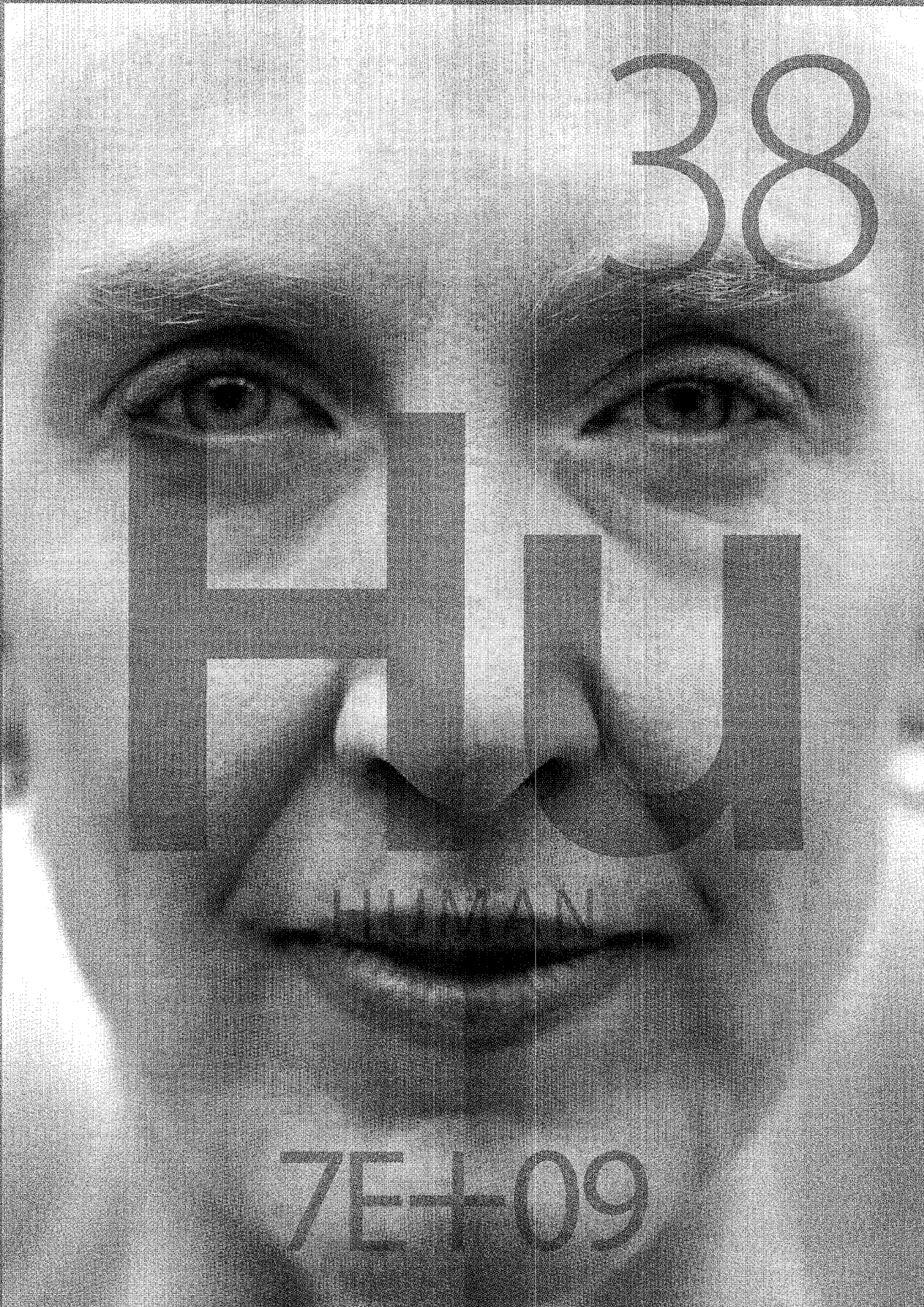
The only light in the darkness was the administration of Mr. Roosevelt and the New Deal in the United States. At a time of weakness and mounting despair in the democratic world, Mr. Roosevelt radiated confidence and strength. He was the leader of the democratic world, and even today upon him alone, of all the statesmen of the thirties, no cloud has rested—neither on him nor on the New Deal, which to European eyes still looks a bright chapter in the history of mankind ...

His internal policy was plainly animated by a humanitarian purpose. After the unbridled individualism of the twenties which had led to economic collapse and widespread misery, he was seeking to establish new rules of social justice. He was trying to do this without forcing his country into some doctrinaire strait jacket, whether of socialism or state capitalism or the kind of new social organization which the Fascist regimes flaunted as the New Order. Social discontent was high in the United States; faith in businessmen as saviors of society had evaporated overnight after the famous Wall Street crash, and Mr. Roosevelt was providing a vast safety valve for pent-up bitterness and indignation, and trying to prevent revolution and construct a régime which should establish greater economic equality, social justice and happiness, above all, human happiness—ideals which were in the best tradition of American life—without altering the basis of freedom and democracy in his country ...

It is not too much to say that he altered the fundamental concept of government and its obligations to the governed ... The welfare state, so much denounced, has obviously come to stay: the direct moral responsibility for minimum standards of living and social services which it took for granted, are today accepted almost without a murmur by the most conservative politicians ...

Mr. Roosevelt's example strengthened democracy everywhere—that is to say, the view that the promotion of social justice and individual liberty does not necessarily mean the end of all efficient government; that power and order are not identical with a strait jacket of doctrine, whether economic or political; that it is possible to reconcile individual liberty and a loose texture of society with the indispensable minimum of organization and authority. And in this belief lies what Mr. Roosevelt's greatest predecessor once described as the last best hope on earth.

Volume 196, No. 1, pp. 67–71



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world that welcomes change is about to meet the element of change: the Human Element.

THE RUNAWAY PRESIDENCY

November 1973

BY ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER JR.

....

As a steady stream of disturbing revelations surfaced in the Watergate investigation, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.—a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and a former adviser to President Kennedy—argued that under Richard Nixon's insidious influence, the power of the presidency had spiraled out of control.

Today the pessimism of the Supreme Court in an 1866 decision, *ex parte Milligan*, seems ... prescient. The nation, as Justice [David] Davis wrote for the Court then, has "no right to expect that it will always have wise and humane rulers, sincerely attached to the principles of the Constitution. Wicked men, ambitious of power, with hatred of liberty and contempt of law, may fill the place once occupied by Washington and Lincoln" ...

Whether Nixon himself was witting or unwitting, what is clearly beyond dispute is his responsibility for the moral atmosphere within his official family. White House aides do not often do things they know their principal would not wish them to do—a proposition which I and dozens of other former White House aides can certify from experience ...

This is not the White House we have known—those of us, Democrats or Republicans, who served other Presidents in other years. Appointment to the White House of Roosevelt or Truman or Eisenhower or Kennedy or Johnson seemed the highest responsibility one could expect and therefore required higher standards of behavior than most of us had recognized before. And most of us look back at our White House experience, not with shame and incredulity, as the Nixon young men do, but as the most exhilarating time in our lives ...

The nature of an activist President ... in Samuel Lubell's phrase, is to run with the ball until he is tackled. As conditions abroad and at home have nourished the imperial presidency, tacklers have had to be more than usually sturdy and intrepid.

How to make external checks effective? Congress can tie the presidency down by a thousand small legal strings; but, like Gulliver, the President can always break loose. The effective means of controlling the presidency lie not in law but in politics. For the American President rules by influence; and the withdrawal of consent, by Congress, by the press, by public opinion, can bring any President down. The great Presidents have understood this ...

I would argue that what the country needs today is a little serious disrespect for the office of the presidency; a refusal to give any more weight to a President's words than the intelligence of the utterance, if spoken by anyone else, would command; an understanding of the point made so aptly by Montaigne: "Sits he on never so high a throne, a man still sits on his bottom."

Volume 232, No. 5, pp. 43-55

NO APPARENT MOTIVE

November 2002

BY P. J. O'ROURKE

....

"It is no bad thing," suggested the humorist and Atlantic correspondent P. J. O'Rourke in 2002, "that our politicians are fools."

After thirty years of making fun of politicians, I have decided, contrary to all rules of good humor, that I don't like them. Not that politicians are dislikable. It is their job to be liked. They are very busy at this job and at many other jobs. A politician's day is long. He gets into the office early, reads newspaper clippings with his name highlighted, submits to a radio interview with Howard Stern, goes to a prayer breakfast and an ACLU lunch, checks opinion polls, meets with an NRA delegation, makes a friendly call to Al Sharpton, sits in the Inland Waterways Committee hearing room drawing pictures of sailboats and seagulls on a notepad, proposes National Dried Plum Week, votes "yea" (or is it "nay"?), on something or other (consult staff), exercises with the President, recovers from a faked charley horse after being lapped on the White House jogging track, watches the signature machine sign letters to constituents, returns a corporate campaign contribution to WorldCom, speaks at a dinner supporting campaign-finance reform, goes home, gets on the phone, and fundraises until all hours ...

What is obnoxious about the motives of politicians—whatever those motives may be—is that politicians must announce their motives as visionary and grand. Try this with the ordinary activities of your day:

My dear wife and beloved children, I say to you this—I will mow the lawn. Lawns are a symbol of America's spacious freedoms and green prosperity. Such noble tokens of well-being and independence must not go untended, lest we show the world that liberty is mere license and see the very ground upon which we stand, as Americans, grow tangled with the weeds of irresponsibility and be fruitful only in the tares of greed. I will give the grass clippings to the poor.

Politicians are not, as a class, outstandingly evil or insane. For the most part they're just ridiculous people ...

It is no bad thing that our politicians are fools. We mortals all famously are. And the theory of democracy is that we can rule ourselves. If exceptionally wise and able men were required to run our democratic system, we'd have a lot of explaining to do to the other fools around the world, from Zimbabwe to North Korea, upon whom we are always urging democratic institutions. Anyway, the history of kingdoms, oligarchies, and dictatorships indicates that ordinary fools do a pretty good job in politics, comparatively.

Volume 290, No. 4, pp. 34-35

Celebrating 150 years of publishing, *The Atlantic* will host a national tour, convening prominent writers, commentators, and public figures for lively conversation and a celebration of ideas.

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The furor over Kim Jong Il's missile tests and nuclear brinksmanship obscures the real threat: the prospect of North Korea's catastrophic collapse. How the regime ends could determine the balance of power in Asia for decades. The likely winner? China

When North Korea FALLS

BY ROBERT D. KAPLAN

The abbreviation for North Korea used by American military officers says it all: KFR, the Kim Family Regime. It is a regime whose demonization by the American media and policy makers has obscured some vital facts. North Korea's founder, Kim Il Sung, was not merely a dreary Stalinist tyrant. As defectors from his country will tell you, he was also a popular anti-Japanese guerrilla leader in the mold of Enver Hoxha, the Stalinist tyrant of Albania who led his countrymen in a successful insurgency against the Nazis. Nor is his son Kim Jong Il anything like the childish psychopath parodied in the film *Team America: World Police*. It's true that Kim Jong Il was once a playboy. But he has evolved into a canny operator. Andrei Lankov, a professor of history at South Korea's Kookmin University, in Seoul, says that under different circumstances Kim might have actually become the successful Hollywood film producer that regime propaganda claims he already is.

Kim Jong Il's succession was aided by the link that his father had established in the North Korean mind between the Kim Family Regime and the Choson Dynasty, which ruled the Korean peninsula for 500 years, starting in the late fourteenth century. Expertly tutored by his father, Kim consolidated power and manipulated the Chinese, the Americans, and the South Koreans into subsidizing him throughout the 1990s. And Kim is hardly impulsive: he has the equivalent of think tanks studying how best to respond to potential attacks from the United States and South Korea—attacks that themselves would be reactions to crises cleverly instigated by the North Korean government in Pyongyang. “The regime constitutes an extremely rational bunch of killers,” Lankov says.

Yet for all Kim's canniness, there is evidence that he may be losing his edge. And that may be reason to worry: totalitarian regimes close to demise are apt to get panicky and do rash things. The weaker North Korea gets, the more dangerous it becomes. The question that should be of greatest concern to the U.S. military in the Pacific—and the question that will likely determine the global balance of power in Asia for generations—is, What happens when North Korea collapses?

THE NIGHTMARE AFTER IRAQ

On the Korean peninsula, the Cold War has never ended. On the somber, seaweed-toned border dividing the two Koreas, amid the cries of egrets and Manchurian cranes, I observed South Korean soldiers standing frozen in tae kwon do ready positions, their fists clenched and forearms tightened, staring into the faces of their North Korean counterparts. Each side picks its tallest, most intimidating soldiers for the task (they are still short by American standards).

In the immediate aftermath of the Korean War, the South raised a 328-foot flagpole; the North responded with a 525-foot pole, then put a flag on it whose dry weight is 595 pounds. The North built a two-story building in the Joint Security Area at Panmunjom; the South built a three-story one. The North then added another story to its building. “The land of one-upmanship,” is how one U.S. Army sergeant describes the DMZ, or demilitarized zone.

The two sides once held a meeting in Panmunjom that went on for eleven hours. Because there was no formal agreement about when to take a bathroom break, neither side budged. The meeting became known as the “Battle of the Bladders.”

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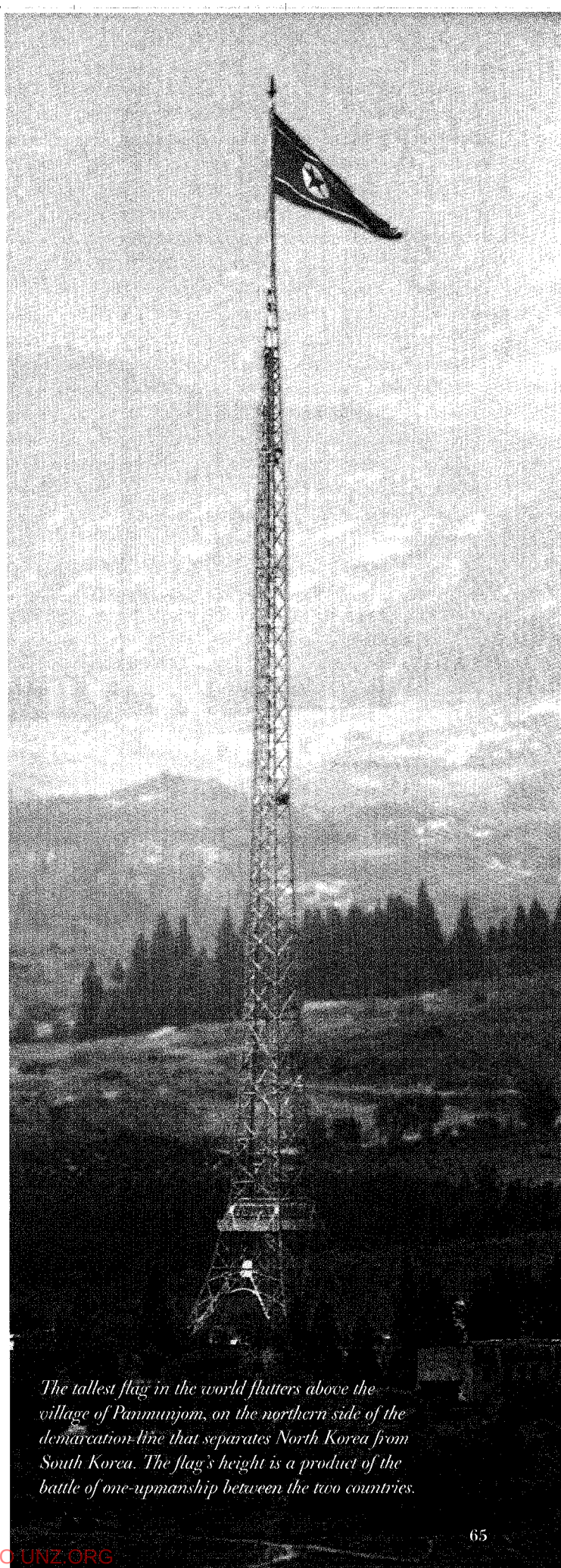
In other divided countries of the twentieth century—Vietnam, Germany, Yemen—the forces of unity ultimately triumphed. But history suggests that unification does not happen through a calibrated political process in which the interests of all sides are respected. Rather, it tends to happen through a cataclysm of events that, piles of white papers and war-gaming exercises notwithstanding, catches experts by surprise.

Given that North Korea's army of 1.2 million soldiers has been increasingly deployed toward the South Korean border, the Korean peninsula looms as potentially the next American military nightmare. In 1980, 40 percent of North Korean combat forces were deployed south of Pyongyang near the DMZ; by 2003, more than 70 percent were. As the saying goes among American soldiers, "There is no peacetime in the ROK." (ROK, pronounced "rock," is militaryspeak for the Republic of Korea.) One has merely to observe the Patriot missile batteries, the reinforced concrete hangars, and the blast barriers at the U.S. Air Force bases at Osan and Kunsan, south of Seoul—which are as heavily fortified as any bases in Iraq—to be aware of this. A marine in Okinawa told me, "North Korea is not some third-rate, Middle Eastern conventional army. These brainwashed Asians"—as he crudely put it—"will stand and fight." American soldiers in Korea refer to the fighting on the peninsula between 1950 and 1953 as "the first Korean War." The implicit assumption is that there will be a second.

This helps explain why Korea may be the most dismal place in the world for U.S. troops to be deployed—worse, in some ways, than Iraq. While I traveled on the peninsula, numerous members of the combat-arms community, both air and infantry, told me that they would rather be in Iraq or Afghanistan than in Korea, which constitutes the worst of all military worlds. Soldiers and airmen often live on a grueling wartime schedule, with constant drills, and yet they also have to put up with the official folderol that is part of all peacetime bases—the saluting and inspections that fall by the wayside in war zones, where the only thing that matters is how well you fight. The weather on the peninsula is lousy, too: the winds charging down from Siberia make the winters unbearably frigid, and the monsoons coming off the Pacific Ocean make the summers hot and humid. The dust blowing in from the Gobi Desert doesn't help.

The threat from north of the DMZ is formidable. North Korea boasts 100,000 well-trained special-operations forces and one of the world's largest biological and chemical arsenals. It has stockpiles of anthrax, cholera, and plague, as well as eight industrial facilities for producing chemical agents—any of which could be launched at Seoul by the army's conventional artillery. If the governing infrastructure in Pyongyang were to unravel, the result could be widespread lawlessness (compounded by the guerrilla mentality of the Kim Family Regime's armed forces), as well as mass migration out of and within North Korea. In short, North Korea's potential for anarchy is equal to that of Iraq, and the potential for the deployment of weapons of mass destruction—either during or after pre-collapse fighting—is far greater.

REUTERS/LEE JAE WON



The tallest flag in the world flutters above the village of Panmunjom, on the northern side of the demarcation-line that separates North Korea from South Korea. The flag's height is a product of the battle of one-upmanship between the two countries.

For a harbinger of the kind of chaos that looms on the peninsula consider Albania, which was for some years the most anarchic country in post-Communist Eastern Europe, save for war-torn Yugoslavia. On a visit to Albania before the Stalinist regime there finally collapsed, I saw vicious gangs of boys as young as eight harassing people. North Korea is reportedly plagued by the same phenomenon outside of its showcase capital. That may be an indication of what lies ahead. In fact, what terrifies South Koreans more than North Korean missiles is North Korean refugees pouring south. The Chinese, for their part, have nightmare visions of millions of North Korean refugees heading north over the Yalu River into Manchuria.

Obviously, it would be reckless not to worry about North Korea's missile and WMD technologies. In August, there were reports yet again that Kim Jong Il was preparing an underground nuclear test. And the North test fired seven missiles in July. According to U.S. data, three of the missiles were Scud-Cs, and three were No-dong-As with ranges of 300 to 1,000 miles; all were capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. (Whether North Korea has such warheads is not definitively known, but it is widely believed to have in the neighborhood of ten—and the KFR certainly has the materials and technological know-how to build them.) The third type of missile, a Taep'o-dong-2, has a range of 2,300 to 9,300 miles, which means it could conceivably hit the continental United States. Though the Taep'o-dong-2 failed after takeoff during the recent testing, it did so at the point of maximum dynamic pressure—the same point where the space shuttle *Challenger* exploded, and the moment when things are most likely to go wrong. So this is likely not an insoluble problem for the KFR.

THE SEVEN STAGES OF COLLAPSE

Kim Jong Il's compulsion to demonstrate his missile prowess is a sign of his weakness. Contrary to popular perception in the United States, Kim doesn't stay up at night worrying about what the Americans might do to him; it's not North Korea's weakness relative to the United States that preoccupies him. Rather, if he does stay up late worrying, it's about China. He knows the Chinese have always had a greater interest in North Korea's geography—with its additional outlets to the sea close to Russia—than they have in the long-term survival of his regime. (Like us, even as they want the regime to survive, the Chinese have plans for the northern half of the Korean peninsula that do not include the "Dear Leader.") One of Kim's main goals in so aggressively displaying North Korea's missile capacity is to compel the United States to deal directly with him, thereby making his otherwise weakening state seem stronger. And the stronger Pyongyang appears to be, the better off it is in its crucial dealings with Beijing, which are what really matter to Kim.

To Kim's sure dismay, the American response to his recent missile tests was a shrug. President George W. Bush dispatched Christopher Hill, his assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, to the region rather than Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. I was in South Korea during the missile firings, and there were few signs of alert on any of the U.S. bases in Korea. Pilots in several fighter squadrons

were told not to drink too much on their days off, in case they had to be called in, but that was about the extent of it.

What should concentrate the minds of American strategists is not Kim's missiles per se but rather what his decision to launch them says about the stability of his regime. Middle- and upper-middle-level U.S. officers based in South Korea and Japan are planning for a meltdown of North Korea that, within days or even hours of its occurrence, could present the world—meaning, really, the American military—with the greatest stabilization operation since the end of World War II. "It could be the mother of all humanitarian relief operations," Army Special Forces Colonel David Maxwell told me. On one day, a semi-starving population of 23 million people would be Kim Jong Il's responsibility; on the next, it would be the U.S. military's, which would have to work out an arrangement with the Chinese People's Liberation Army (among others) about how to manage the crisis.

Fortunately, the demise of North Korea is more likely to be drawn out. Robert Collins, a retired Army master sergeant and now a civilian area expert for the American military in South Korea, outlined for me seven phases of collapse in the North:

- **Phase One:** resource depletion;
- **Phase Two:** the failure to maintain infrastructure around the country because of resource depletion;
- **Phase Three:** the rise of independent fiefs informally controlled by local party apparatchiks or warlords, along with widespread corruption to circumvent a failing central government;
- **Phase Four:** the attempted suppression of these fiefs by the KFR once it feels that they have become powerful enough;
- **Phase Five:** active resistance against the central government;
- **Phase Six:** the fracture of the regime; and
- **Phase Seven:** the formation of new national leadership.

North Korea probably reached Phase Four in the mid-1990s, but was saved by subsidies from China and South Korea, as well as by famine aid from the United States. It has now gone back to Phase Three.

Kim Jong Il learned a powerful lesson by watching the fall of the Ceausescu Family Regime, in Romania: Take utter and complete control of the military. And so he has. The KFR now rules through the army. There have been only individual defections of North Korean soldiers to the South. Even small, unit-level defections—which would indicate that soldiers are talking to one another and are no longer afraid of exposure by comrades—have not yet occurred. One defector from the North's special-operations forces told me that soldiers in the ranks are afraid to discuss politics with one another.

The North Korean People's Army is simply too big to be kept happy and well fed, so the regime concentrates on keeping the elite units comfortable. The defector I spoke to—a scout swimmer—told me that while the special-operations forces live well, the extreme poverty of conventional soldiers



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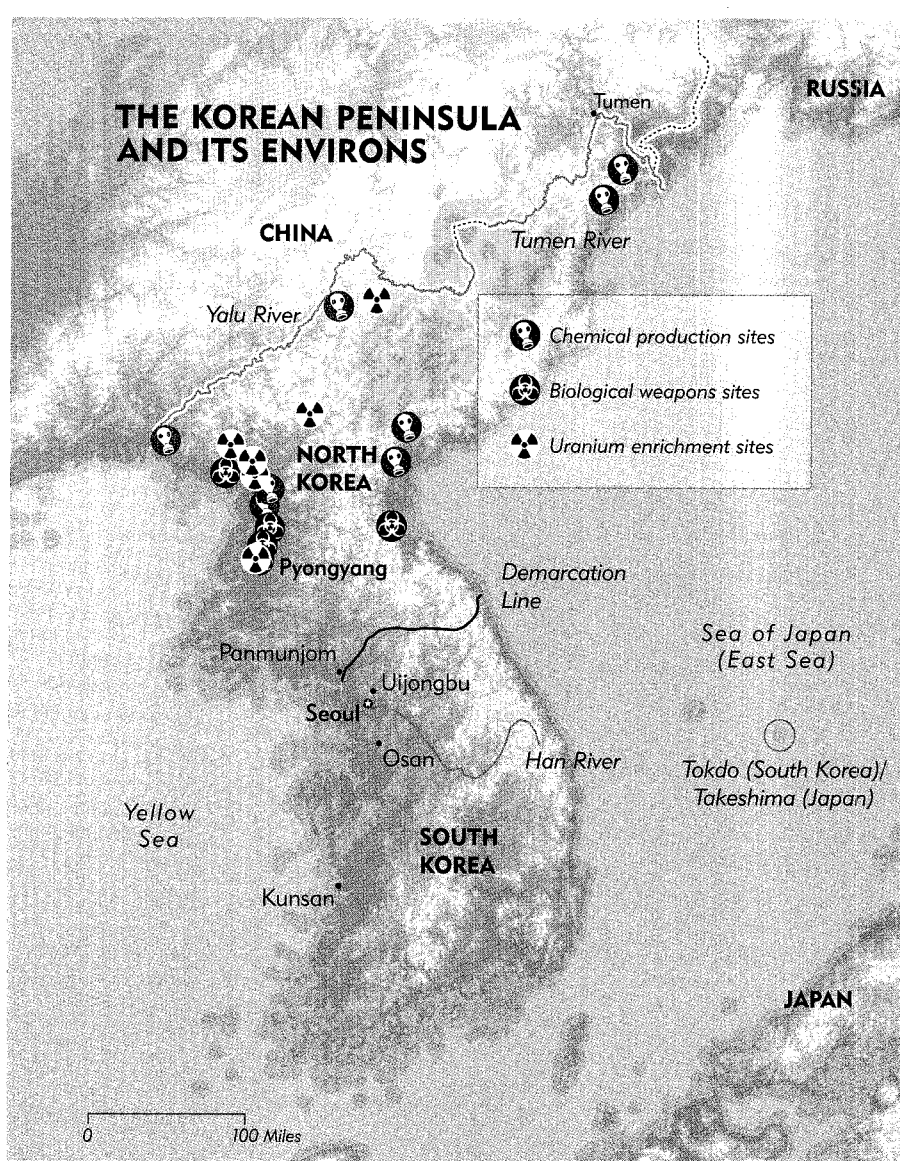


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THE KOREAN PENINSULA AND ITS ENVIRONS



would make their loyalty to Kim Jong Il in a difficult war questionable. Would they fight to defend the KFR if there were an unforeseen rebellion? The Romanian example suggests that it depends on the circumstances: when workers revolted in 1987 in Brasov, the Romanian military crushed them; when ethnic Hungarians did so two years later in Timisoara, the military deserted the regime.

HOW TO PREVENT ANOTHER IRAQ

Stephen Bradner, a civilian expert on the region and an adviser to the military in South Korea, has thought a lot about the tactical and operational problems an unraveling North Korean state would present. So has Colonel Maxwell, the chief of staff of U.S. Special Operations in South Korea. "The regime in Pyongyang could collapse without necessarily its army corps and brigades collapsing," Maxwell says. "So we might have to mount a relief operation at the same time that we'd be conducting combat ops. If there is anybody in the UN who thinks it will just be a matter of feeding people, they're smoking dope."

Maxwell has conducted similar operations before: he was the commander of a U.S. Army Special Forces battalion that landed on Basilan Island, in the southern Philippines, in early 2002, part of a mission that combined humanitar-

ian assistance with counterinsurgency operations against Jemaah Islamiyah and the Abu Sayyaf Group, two terrorist organizations. But the Korean peninsula presents a far vaster and more difficult challenge. "The situation in the North could become so messy and ambiguous," Maxwell says, "that the collapse of the chain of command of the KFR could be more dangerous than the preservation of it, particularly when one considers control over WMD."

In order to prevent a debacle of the sort that occurred in Iraq—but with potentially deadlier consequences, because of the free-floating WMD—a successful relief operation would require making contacts with KFR generals and various factions of the former North Korean military, who would be vying for control in different regions. If the generals were not absorbed into the operational command structure of the occupying force, Maxwell says, they might form the basis of an insurgency. The Chinese, who have connections inside the North Korean military, would be best positioned to make these contacts—but the role of U.S. Army Special Forces in this effort might be substantial. Green Berets and the CIA would be among the first in, much like in Afghanistan in 2001.

Obviously, the United States could not unilaterally insert troops into a dissolved North Korea. It would likely be a four-power intervention force—the United States, China, South Korea, and Russia—officially sanctioned by the United Nations. Japan would be kept out (though all parties would gladly accept Japanese money for the endeavor).

Although Japan's proximity to the peninsula gives it the most to fear from reunification, Korean hatred of the Japanese makes participation of Japanese troops in an intervention force unlikely. Between 1910 and 1945, Japan brutally occupied not only Korea but parts of China too, and it defeated Russia on land and at sea in the early twentieth century. Tokyo may have more reason than any other government for wanting to put boots on the ground in a collapsed North Korea, but it won't be able to, because both China and South Korea would fight tooth and nail to prevent it from doing so.

Whereas Japan's strategic position would be dramatically weakened by a collapsed North Korean state, China would eventually benefit. A post-KFR Korean peninsula could be more or less under Seoul's control—and China is now South Korea's biggest trading partner. Driving along the coast, all I saw at South Korean ports were Chinese ships.

Other factors also work in Beijing's favor. China harbors thousands of North Korean defectors that it would send back after a collapse, in order to build a favorable political base for China's gradual economic takeover of the Tumen River region—the northeast Asian river valley where China, Russia, and North Korea intersect, with good port facilities



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on the Pacific. De facto control of a future Tumen Prosperity Sphere would bolster China's fiscal strength, helping it to do economic battle with the United States and Japan. If China's troops could carve out a buffer zone in the part of North Korea near Manchuria—where China is now developing massive infrastructure projects, such as roads and ports—Beijing might then sanction the installation of an international coalition elsewhere in the North.

Russia's weakness in the Far East is demonstrated by its failure to prevent the creeping demographic conquest of its eastern territories by ethnic Chinese. It will be truculent in guarding its interests on the Korean peninsula. And Russia does have a historical legacy here: North Korea was originally a Soviet creation and client state. Keeping Russian troops out of Korea would probably be more trouble for the other powers than letting some in.

Of course, South Korea would bear the brunt of the economic and social disruption in returning the peninsula to normalcy. No official will say this out loud, but South Korea—along with every other country in the region—has little interest in reunification, unless it were to happen gradually over years or decades. The best outcome would be a South Korean protectorate in much of the North, officially under an international trusteeship, that would keep the two Koreas functionally separate for a significant period of time. This would allow each country time to prepare for a unified Korean state, without the attendant chaos.

infantry attack on South Korea's capital is something that not even a fool would contemplate. So if the North were to attack, it would likely resort instead to a low-grade demonstration of "shock and awe," using its 13,000 artillery pieces and multiple-rocket launchers to fire more than 300,000 shells per hour on the South Korean capital, where close to half the nation's 49 million people live. The widespread havoc this would cause would be amplified by North Korean special-operations forces, which would infiltrate the South to sabotage water plants and train and bus terminals. Meanwhile, the North Korean People's Army would march on the city of Uijongbu, north of Seoul, from which it could cross over the Han River and bypass Seoul from the east.

But this strategy would fail. While American A-10 Warthogs, F-16 Vipers, and other aircraft would destroy enemy missile batteries and kill many North Korean troops inside South Korea, submarine-launched missiles and B-2 Spirit bombers sent from Guam and Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri would take out strategic assets inside North Korea. In the meantime, the South Korean army would quickly occupy the transport hubs, while unleashing its own divisions and special-operations forces on the marauding People's Army. The KFR knows this; thus any such invasion would have to be the act of a regime in the latter phases of disintegration. North Korea's lone hope would be that the hourly carnage it could produce—in the time between the first artillery barrage on Seoul and the beginning of a

A war on the Korean peninsula would be horrific. Iraq and Afghanistan would look clean by comparison.

Following the Communist regime's collapse, the early stabilization of the North could fall unofficially to the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) and U.S. Forces Korea (which is a semiautonomous subcommand of PACOM), also wearing blue UN helmets. But while the U.S. military would have operational responsibility, it would not have sole control. It would have to lead an unwieldy regional coalition that would need to deploy rapidly in order to stabilize the North and deliver humanitarian assistance. A successful relief operation in North Korea in the weeks following the regime's collapse could mean the difference between anarchy and prosperity on the peninsula for years to come.

IF NORTH KOREA ATTACKS

But what if rather than simply unraveling, the North launched a surprise attack on the South? This is probably less likely to happen now than it was, say, two decades ago, when Kim Il Sung commanded a stronger state and the South Korean armed forces were less mature. But Colonel Maxwell and others are preparing for this possibility.

Simply driving through Seoul, one of the world's great and congested megacities, makes it clear that a conventional

robust military response by South Korea and the United States—would lead the South Korean left, abetted by the United Nations and elements of the global media, to cry out for diplomacy and a negotiated settlement as an alternative to violence.

And there is no question: the violence would be horrific. Iraq and Afghanistan would look clean by comparison. A South Korea filled with North Korean troops would be (in military parlance) a "target-rich environment," in which the good guys and the bad guys would always be close to each other. "Gnarly chaos," is how one F-16 Viper pilot described it to me. "The ultimate fog of war." The battlefield would be made more confusing by the serious language barrier that exists between American pilots and South Korean JTACs, or Joint Tactical Air Controllers, who would have to guide the Americans to many of their targets. A-10 and F-16 pilots in South Korea have complained to me that this weak link in the bilateral military relationship would drive up the instances of friendly-fire and collateral civilian deaths—on which the media undoubtedly would then concentrate. As part of a deal to halt the bloodbath, members of the KFR might be able to negotiate their own post-regime survival.

WHAT NOW, LIEUTENANT?

But middle and upper-middle levels of the American military worry less about an indiscriminate artillery attack on the South than about a very discriminate one. My sources feared that in the aftermath of the KFR's missile launches in July, the Bush administration might actually have been foolish enough to react militarily—which might have been exactly what Kim Jong Il was hoping for, since it would have allowed him to achieve a primary strategic goal: splitting the alliance between South Korea and the United States. How would that happen? After the United States responded in a targeted fashion to the missile launches or some other future

likely; as noted, regimes like this one, in the latter stages of collapse, are apt to behave irresponsibly, possibly resorting to WMD. Another problem is that we can't do much to squeeze the North Koreans economically; it's China, not the United States, that is really keeping the regime alive. The Chinese are already in the process of gaining operational control over anything in North Korea that has strategic economic and military value: mines, railways, and so on. Thus, any soft landing for the KFR would more likely be orchestrated by Beijing than by Washington, even though the Chinese might not mind saddling the Americans with the short-term military responsibility of stabilizing a collapsed North Korea.



North Korean soldiers in a training exercise, staged in response to a joint military display by the United States and South Korea

outrage, the North would initiate an intensive five- or ten-minute-long artillery barrage on Seoul, killing some Americans and South Koreans near Yongsan Garrison ("Dragon Mountain"), the American military's Green Zone in the heart of the city. Then the North would simply stop. And after the shell fire halted, the proverbial question among American officers in a quandary would arise: *What now, Lieutenant?*

Politically speaking, we would be trumped. The South Korean left—which has been made powerful by an intrusively large American troop presence and by decades of manipulation by the North—would blame the United States for the carnage in Seoul, pointing out that it had been provoked by the Americans' targeted strike against North Korea. The United Nations and the global media would subtly blame Washington for the crisis—and call not so subtly for peace talks. With that, the KFR would get a new lease on life, with more aid forthcoming from the international community to keep it afloat.

Which is why some of the military and civilian experts I spoke with argue for economic warfare against the North. Stop helping the regime with humanitarian aid, they say. The North Korean population has been on the brink of starvation for decades. The forests are denuded. People are eating tree bark. Stop prolonging the agony. Help the KFR collapse.

Of course, one problem with this strategy is that it could end up making North Korea's direst military options more

AFTER REUNIFICATION

If the peninsula could be stabilized after the fall of the KFR, this Greater Korea would have an instant, undisputed enemy: Japan. Any Korean politician would be able to stand up in parliament and get political mileage out of an anti-Japanese tirade. The Japanese know this, and it's helping fuel their remilitarization. (The Japanese navy, in particular, has been emphasizing the latest diesel submarines and Aegis destroyers.) In July, there was a saber-rattling contest between Tokyo and Seoul over disputed islets that South Koreans call Tokdo and the Japanese Takeshima, in what the Koreans refer to as the East Sea and the Japanese the Sea of Japan. Harsh words were exchanged after South Korea sent a survey ship to the area. The United States has a history of underestimating historical-ethnic disputes: in the 1980s, it paid insufficient attention to ethnic tensions in Yugoslavia; more recently, it mistakenly downplayed Sunni-Shiite tensions in Iraq. It should not make the same mistake in Asia.

Here it is useful to review Korean history. In the medieval era, the Koreans fought wars against Chinese dynasties like the Sui and the Tang. But later on, following the rise to power of Korea's own Choson Dynasty, in 1392, Japan gradually caught up with China as Korea's principal adversary. There was a brutal Japanese violation of the peninsula at the end of the sixteenth century, culminating in an orgy of rape and murder, and a savage occupation at the beginning of the

twentieth, which ended only with the Soviet and American conquests. (The Japanese effect on the peninsula has not been all negative: South Koreans may have trouble admitting it, but Japanese colonialism in the early twentieth century nearly doubled the life expectancy of the average Korean.)

Reunification would provide at least one benefit to Japan. As Park Syung Je, an analyst at the Asia Strategy Institute in Seoul, explained to me, a unified Greater Korea might serve to balance against an even more significant threat to Japan: a rising China. But this Greater Korea would still be a linchpin of China's twenty-first-century Asian economic-prosperity sphere, a more benign version of Imperial Japan's Co-Prosperty Sphere of the 1940s. America could be pushed to the margins. Although Korean businessmen would resist economic domination by China, lingering anti-Americanism in South Korea might outweigh that resistance—especially once the generation that still remembers the sacrifices of American servicemen during the 1950s disappears entirely. America's large troop presence will have granted Korea a free society, just as a similar American presence helped to make Germany a free society. But younger generations of South Koreans may remember U.S. troops only negatively—and what is more indelibly inscribed in the Korean national memory is America's support for the Japanese occupation of Korea following the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 and 1905. (This was in exchange for Imperial Japan's support of America's occupation of the Philippines a few years earlier.)

Greater Korea's troubled relationship with China may ultimately be determined by what America does, and specifically by the degree to which the United States can get Japan to recognize its war guilt. If Washington continues to maintain a military alliance with Tokyo without Japan's publicly coming to terms with its past, Greater Korea will move psychologically toward China. President Bush's recent love fest with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi at Graceland may have played well in the United States, but it was seen as an insult in South Korea because of Koizumi's earlier visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, which honors the Japanese war dead—including war criminals. If the United States continues to treat Japan as a golden stepchild, then China and its implicit ally, Greater Korea, will have a tense relationship with Japan and its implicit allies, the United States and India. But because of its own manifold business interests in China, America could only balance against China very delicately.

CHINA VERSUS AMERICA

With so many complex and subtle interests to weigh here, what should the American strategy be over the long term? South Korean army Colonel Chung Kyung Yung, a professor at Seoul's National Defense University, says that after the KFR collapses and the North is stabilized, the wisest thing for the United States to do would be to keep 10,000 troops or so on the peninsula. Such a contingent, he told me, would serve as a statement that the United States is not abandoning Korea to a militarily resurgent Japan. The best way to stabilize Asia, Chung emphasizes, would be to prevent Greater Korea—which would be

fragile in the period after the North's collapse—from becoming a source of contention between China and Japan. Peter Beck, the director of the International Crisis Group's North East Asia Project, agrees. "Because the United States is the furthest away of all these powers," he told me, "it should be perceived as the least dangerous—the one power without territorial ambitions."

Unfortunately, South Korean politics might make it more difficult to keep American troops on the peninsula long term. Yes, it's true that of the few prominent statues of foreigners in the country, two are of Americans (General Douglas MacArthur and General James Van Fleet, the father of the South Korean armed forces). And it is also true that, because of late-nineteenth-century missionary activity, American-style Protestantism is practically the dominant religion in South Korea. (If North Korea collapses, expect Christian evangelism to quickly replace the Communist regime's Juche ethos of self-reliance: Pyongyang was once the "Jerusalem of Asia" for missionaries.) And yet despite all this, the South Koreans have largely convinced themselves that they need to be as worried about the Americans as they are about the Chinese—just as they have convinced themselves that they should be as afraid of the Japanese as they are of the North Koreans. The fact is that South Koreans may not want *any* American troops in their country.

Already the American air and ground troops who would defend the South if the KFR were to attack are facing increasing restrictions on their training, because of South Korean political pressures. The A-10 squadron that would be flying nonstop sorties near the DMZ in the event of a war had to train in Thailand this past winter, because of limitations Seoul placed on its flight patterns. This is all part of yet another frustration that U.S. troops in South Korea must endure: having to be on a war footing in order to defend a government that wants to be defended but publicly pretends otherwise.

The truth is, many South Koreans have an interest in the perpetuation of the Kim Family Regime, or something like it, since the KFR's demise would usher in a period of economic sacrifice that nobody in South Korea is prepared for. A long-standing commitment by the American military has allowed the country to evolve into a materialistic society. Few South Koreans have any interest in the disruption the collapse of the KFR would produce.

Meanwhile, China's infrastructure investments are already laying the groundwork for a Tibet-like buffer state in much of North Korea, to be ruled indirectly through Beijing's Korean cronies once the KFR unravels. This buffer state will be less oppressive than the morbid, crushing tyranny it will replace. So from the point of view of the average South Korean, the Chinese look to be offering a better deal than the Americans, whose plan for a free and democratic unified peninsula would require South Korean taxpayers to pay much of the cost. The more that Washington thinks narrowly in terms of a democratic Korean peninsula, the more Beijing has the potential to lock the United States out of it. For there is a yawning distance between the Stalinist KFR tyranny and a stable, Western-style democracy: in between

these extremes lie several categories of mixed regimes and benign dictatorships, any of which might offer the North Koreans far more stability as a transition mechanism than anything the United States might be able to provide. No one should forget that South Korea's prosperity and state cohesion were achieved not under a purely democratic government but under Park Chung Hee's benign dictatorship of the 1960s and '70s. Furthermore, North Koreans, who were never ruled by the British, have even less historical experience with democracy than Iraqis. Ultimately, victory on the Korean peninsula will go to the side with the most indirect and nuanced strategy.

The long-term success of America's basic policy on the peninsula hinges on the willingness of South Koreans to make a significant sacrifice, at some point, for the sake of freedom in the North. But *sacrifice* is not a word that voters in free and prosperous societies tend to like. If voters in Western-style democracies are good at anything, it's rationalizing their own selfishness—and it may turn out that the authoritarian Chinese understand the voters of South Korea's free and democratic society better than we do. If that's the case, there may never

killed on the Korean peninsula than in Mesopotamia. Most Americans hope and expect that we will withdraw from Iraq within a few years—yet we still have 32,000 troops in South Korea, more than half a century after the armistice. Korea provides a sense of America's daunting, imperial-like burdens.

But South Korea also provides a lesson in what can be accomplished with patience and dogged persistence. The drive from the airport at Incheon to downtown Seoul goes through the heart of a former urban war zone. South Korea's capital was taken and retaken four times in some of the most intense fighting of the Korean War. Korean men and women who lived through that time will always be grateful for what retired U.S. Army Colonel Robert Killebrew has called American "stick-to-itiveness," without which we would have little hope of remaining a great power.

In the heart of Seoul lies Yongsan Garrison, a leafy, fortified Little America, guarded and surrounded by high walls. Inside these 630 acres, which closely resemble the Panama Canal Zone before the Americans gave it up, are 8,000 American military and diplomatic personnel in manicured suburban homes surrounded by neatly clipped hedges and

Crisis-driven decisions on the Korean peninsula will determine the balance of power throughout Asia.

actually be a Greater Korea in the way that we imagine it. Rather, the North's demise will be carefully managed by Beijing in such a way that the country will go from being a rogue nation to a de facto satellite of the Middle Kingdom—but one with sufficient contact with the South that the Korean yearning for a measure of reunification will be satisfied.

Keep in mind that Asia—largely because it is so economically dynamic—is politically and militarily volatile. Its alliance structures are not nearly as developed as in Europe, which has NATO and the European Union. Conflicting nationalisms are expressed in Asia through more than just soccer games. Thus, the question of whether it's to be the American or the Chinese vision of North Korea's future that gets realized may hinge on political-military decisions made in the midst of an opaque and confusing crisis.

NORTH KOREA AND THE FUTURE OF ASIA

Before I left Seoul, I met with a local military legend. Retired General Paik Sun Yup, now eighty-six years old, was the First Infantry Division commander during the Korean War and worked hand in hand with General MacArthur. When we spoke, Paik insisted that crisis-driven political-military decisions here will ultimately determine the balance of power throughout Asia, the most important region for the world's economy. "This peninsula is the pivot," he said.

When I reflected on Paik's words later, it occurred to me that while the United States is in its fourth year of a war in Iraq, it has been on a war footing in Korea for fifty-six years now. More than ten times as many Americans have been

backyard barbecue grills. I drove by a high school, baseball and football fields, a driving range, a hospital, a massive commissary, a bowling alley, and restaurants. U.S. Forces Korea and its attendant bureaucracies are located in red-brick buildings that the Americans inherited in 1945 from the Japanese occupiers. Korea is so substantial a military commitment for us that it merits its own, semiautonomous subcommand of PACOM—just as Iraq, unofficially anyway, merits its own four-star subcommand of CENTCOM.

The United States hopes to complete a troop drawdown in South Korea in 2008. Having moved into Yongsan Garrison when Korea's future seemed highly uncertain, American troops plan to give up this prime downtown real estate and relocate to Camp Humphreys, in Pyongtaek, thirty miles to the south. The number of ground troops will drop to 25,000, and will essentially comprise a skeleton of logistical support shops, which would be able to acquire muscles and tendons in the form of a large invasion force in the event of a war or a regime collapse that necessitated a military intervention.

Patience and dogged persistence are heroic attributes. But while military units can be expected to be heroic, one should not expect a home front to be forever so. And while in the fullness of time patience and dogged persistence can breed success, it is the kind of success that does not necessarily reward the victor but, rather, the player best able to take advantage of the new situation. It is far too early to tell who ultimately will benefit from a stable and prosperous Mesopotamia, if one should ever emerge. But in the case of Korea, it looks like it will be the Chinese. ▀



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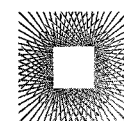
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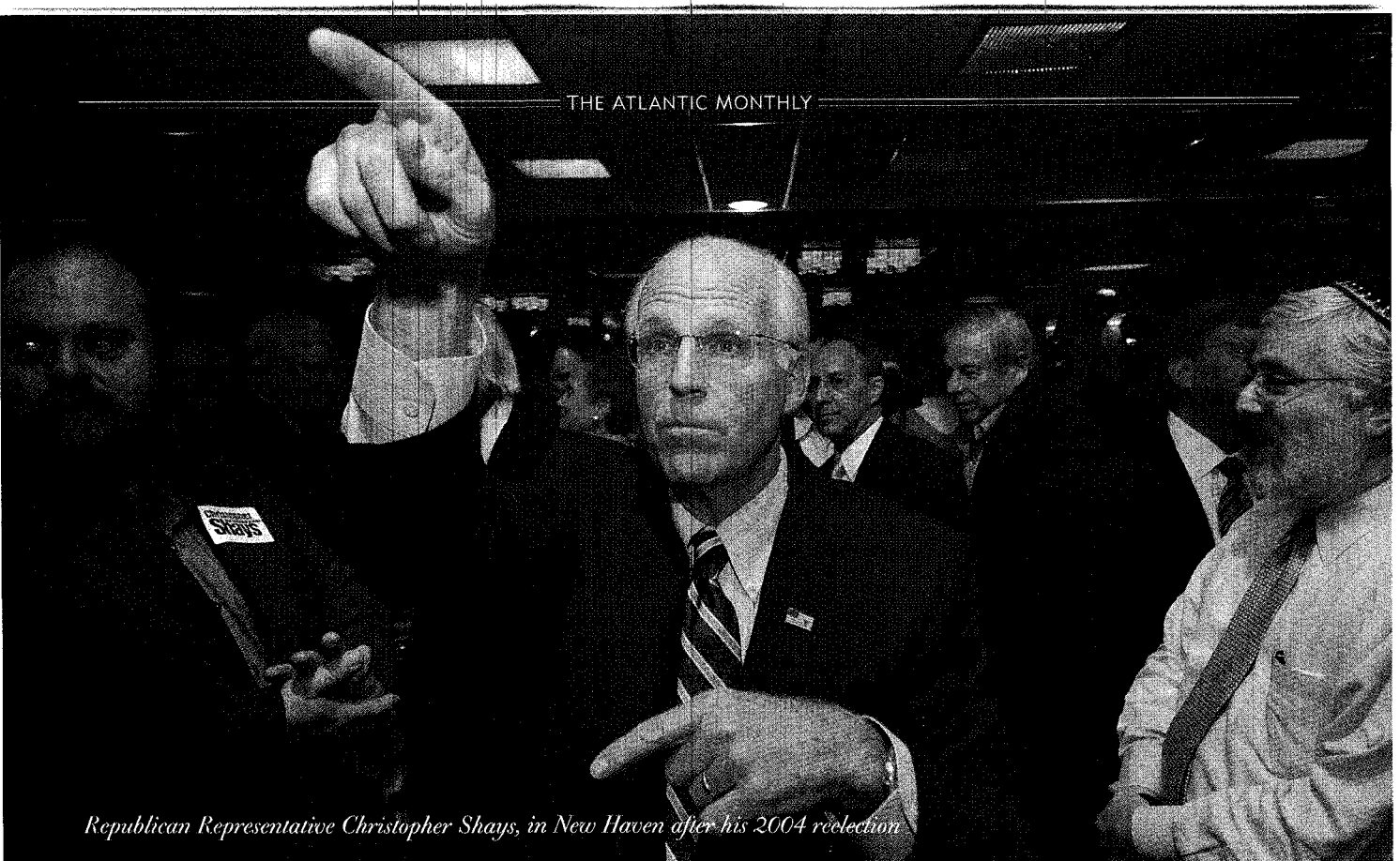
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Republican Representative Christopher Shays, in New Haven after his 2004 reelection

Neglected children, hellish commutes, shrill coworkers, and first pitches at Little League games—why it's no picnic to be a moderate in the House of Representatives

Running for Their Lives

BY JULIET EILPERIN

The most pressing issue in American politics this November shouldn't be who's going to win seats in the House of Representatives, but who's most likely to lose them: moderates in swing districts. We've set up a system that rewards the most partisan representatives with all-but-lifetime tenure while forcing many of those who work toward legislative compromises to wage an endless, soul-sapping fight for political survival.

Thanks to today's expertly drawn congressional districts, most lawmakers represent seats that are either overwhelmingly Republican or overwhelmingly Democratic. As long as House members appeal to their party's base, they're in okay shape—a strategy that has helped yield a 98 percent reelection rate on Capitol Hill. Short of being indicted or nabbed by the FBI, scandal-ridden incumbents in safe districts usually don't

have to worry much about paying the ultimate political price. Ken Calvert, a Republican representative from California, was caught in a car with a prostitute during his first term but, after putting out campaign literature implying that his Democratic opponent was gay, held on to his seat. Last year Calvert and a business partner bought a four-acre parcel of land in Riverside County for \$550,000; after securing federal funds for the expansion of a nearby freeway interchange, along with federal money to support commercial development in the area, they sold the property for nearly \$1 million. But Democrats say they are not running a serious challenger against Calvert, because the seat leans strongly Republican.

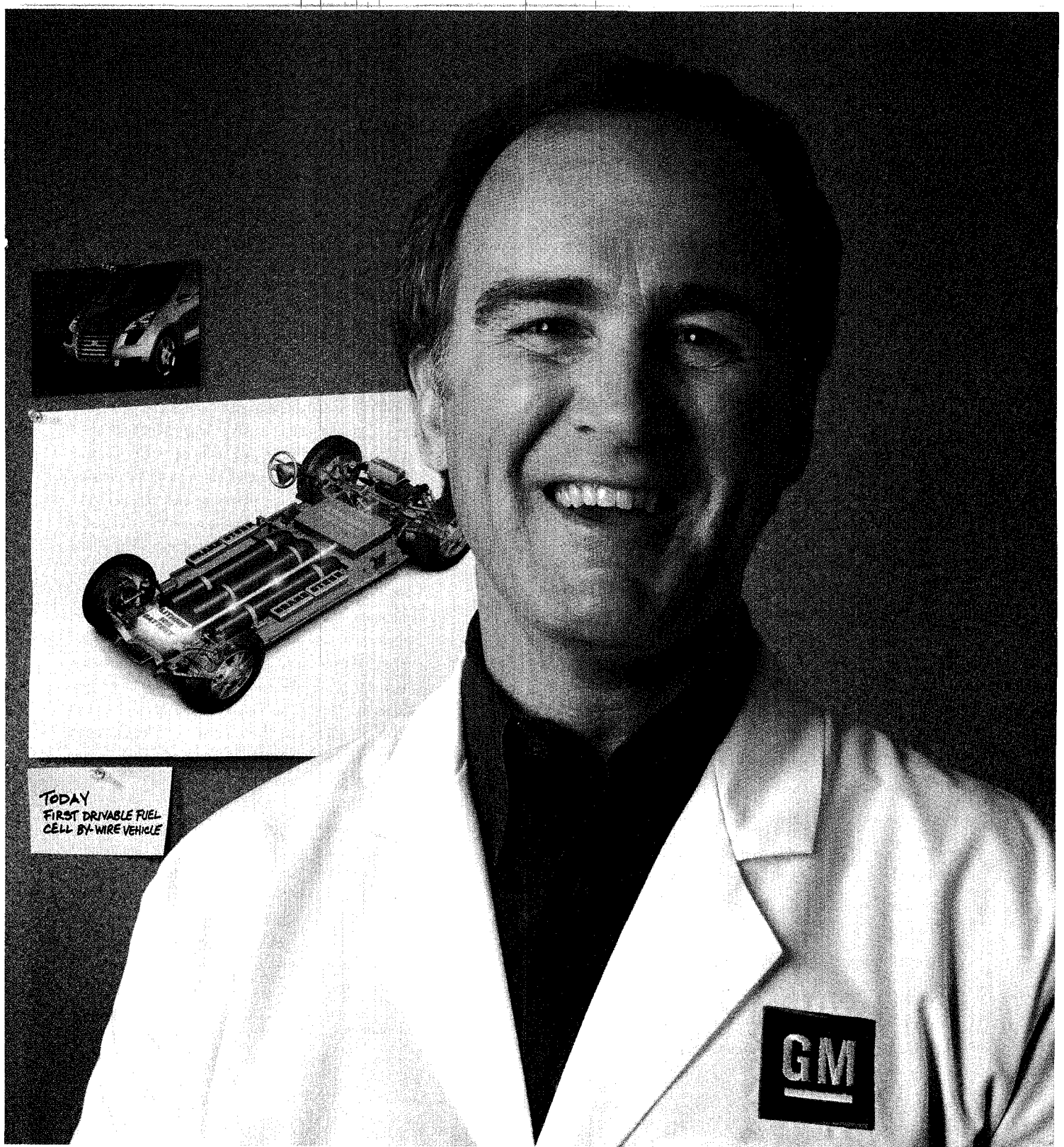
This sort of voter segregation has created a legislative body whose members belong to factions at the opposite ends of the ideological spectrum and rarely engage each other. Members spend as little

Juliet Eilperin is a national reporter for The Washington Post and the author of Fight Club Politics.



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time in Washington as possible, rushing home to districts where they are surrounded by people who think like they do. "Bottom line, the big picture is there are a hundred Republicans who never talk to Democrats on the floor, and a hundred Democrats who never talk to Republicans on the floor," says Collin Peterson, a Minnesota Democrat who occasionally sits with the Republicans on the House floor and does not vote a strict party line. "They don't know each other, they don't like each other, and they don't trust each other." The House is, quite simply, a meaner place than it used to be, in part because so many of the men and women who work there are strangers

STRANGE TALES OF THE KINGDOM OF FIFE

Here Michael Scott, the Wizard of Balwearie,
Set Satan to the task of braiding rope
From sea sand. He might still be laboring
Below the ruined castle as the sea
Slicks his raw material to mud
Or the rare sun dries the grains—all bits of seashell—
So that they run like water through his hands.
Nobody comes to this place just to be here,
A factory town hunkered on the North Sea.
It's business or it's accident. Or returning.
To come back, after thirty years, and stare
At a church—now boarded up—a school, a house,
Might pass for reverence to passersby,
But then you are expected to move on.
Across the Firth the sunshine, grudging through,
Strikes the skyline of the capital,
The domes and spires like monuments of sea coal
And the green slopes that lean toward them like palmers.
So close! So much like wish fulfillment, heaven.
Why not depart for it this instant? No.
Look at him pull his head in from the cold,
Turn collar up to the wind's grit, and stay.
Nobody stays here when the sun is shining
Beyond, where one can see it beckoning,
Unless it's business or by accident.
Here Michael Scott, the Wizard of Balwearie,
Set Satan to the task of braiding rope
From sea sand. He might still be laboring,
Watched by no one but another stranger
Who has his own enchantment to endure.

—MARK JARMAN

*Mark Jarman's latest collection is To the Green Man (2004).
He teaches at Vanderbilt University.*

to one another. They have moved from the corrupt coziness of the 1960s to an even healthier polarization.

A proven track record of reaching across the aisle hasn't exactly bought political protection for the remaining moderates. Charlie Stenholm, a Texas Democrat, cosponsored President Bush's plan to privatize Social Security, yet Texas Republicans ensured his defeat in 2004 by redrawing his congressional district in 2003. Even in this summer's congressional primaries, several candidates lost in part because their opponents successfully attacked their efforts at bipartisan cooperation. Many of the few dozen incumbents facing competitive races

this November are also moderates, who represent districts divided more or less evenly between Republicans and Democrats. Christopher Shays, a Republican representative from Connecticut, has collaborated with Democrats on issues ranging from campaign-finance reform to the environment, but this summer Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chairman Rahm Emanuel approached Shays in the House gym, slung his arm around him, and said, "As one good friend to another: we're going to spend two and a half million against you."

For swing-district representatives like Shays, the day-to-day demands—and indignities—that confront any member trying to stay in office are that much harder. To get a sense of how tight a race Shays faces this year against his opponent, Westport Democrat Diane Farrell, consider this: on June 18—Father's Day—he was throwing the first pitch at the championship game of the Fairfield County Connecticut Jewish Little League. And it was the minor-league championship. Not only had Shays been hoping for a day off from campaigning, but he dreaded the thought of muffing the opening pitch. The only official duty Shays dislikes more, in fact, is pulling the winning ticket for a luxury car out of a hat. As he calculates it, "There's only one winner, and there are 300 to 500 losers"—a disastrous situation if you're aiming to win support in a tight election. Since the odds of success are much better at a Jewish Little League contest (Shays was just throwing a pitch over an empty plate, rather than, say, calling strikes and balls on the kids of potential donors), the congressman showed up that Sunday afternoon, in the broiling heat, sporting his usual khakis and button-down shirt.

Shays is, one can say without exaggeration, one of the nicest members of the House of Representatives. He worked the Little League crowd easily, shaking hands with constituents and brushing aside their thanks for having chosen to spend part of his weekend with them. "Thank you. I love representing you," he said to one couple, before turning to their two young sons. "Hey, guys, I'm Chris. And your name is—?" Doling out White House tour passes, Shays joked with voters about his own uncertain reelection prospects. "Does this come with an expiration date?" asked Sharon Risch, a Fairfield resident who took his business card, on which was written Shays's promise of a personal escort to the

White House gate. "Well, I have to get reelected. That gives you an incentive," he replied.

Shays, at least, has an easy time fund-raising, because he represents one of the wealthiest congressional districts in the country. He doesn't have to plead personally for contributions; if he sends out a direct-mail appeal to his constituents, they usually respond with sizable checks. Other lawmakers have to hustle. Sarah Feinberg, a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee spokeswoman, estimates that incumbent members in a competitive race spend "twenty-five hours a week" fund-raising, while challengers devote "forty to fifty hours a week" to literally dialing for dollars.

Heather Wilson, the forty-five-year-old five-term Republican from New Mexico, is an Air Force Academy graduate and a former Rhodes scholar; she is also something of an anomaly among the representatives whose seats are up for grabs. While Democratic voters in her district have an edge over Republicans, she has voted with her party 87 percent of the time since Bush took office, showing enough of an independent streak that Democrats sometimes have trouble depicting her as a GOP crony. Wilson sided with Democrats to ask the Bush administration to reveal the true cost of its expensive Medicare drug program, and she

fingers downward: Ordinary Mom. (When Cait was younger and would say "I want you" over the phone to Wilson, the congresswoman recalls, "it was almost physically painful.")

Despite some help from the party and the White House, Wilson shoulders most of the fund-raising and campaigning burden herself. One day in early July, she spent part of her morning calling local firefighters, one by one, urging them to show up on July 13 for their union's congressional-endorsement vote. Just before lunch she reached Jeremy Polk, a loyal supporter and member of the Bernalillo Fire Department, whose six-year-old son, Austin, had posed in one of Wilson's campaign posters. "I think we've got a lot of friends in the fire department, and I just want them to know it might be a close vote, and I'd be honored to earn your support again," she told Polk. At the close of the conversation, she added that she'd be sure to look for Austin when she next saw a Bounty commercial, since the towheaded youngster is now in the business of plugging paper towels. And there you have Wilson's life in a nutshell: chatting about paper-towel ads with a union guy, in between meeting with a local semiconductor company and lunching with women business leaders at the local Olive Garden.

The only people who put in longer hours than imperiled rank-and-file members are those who lead them. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi works fourteen-hour days whether or

In the pettiness and intensity of its malice, the House has begun to resemble the 1989 dark comedy *Heathers*, with elected officials in the role of high-school girls.

recently introduced legislation that would require administration officials to brief Congress on electronic surveillance. But because the Democrats think she's vulnerable, her fund-raising challenge is even greater than usual. Last election, her opponent and national Democrats spent \$3.3 million against her. In the previous four contests, her opponents spent more than \$10 million trying to win—and that's not counting the money liberal advocacy groups have poured into her races. Wilson estimates that she will need to raise \$4 million this year to emerge victorious. Her opponent, New Mexico Attorney General Patricia Madrid, has already raised nearly \$2 million, and expects to raise "nearly as much" as Wilson.

In addition to the fourteen-hour workday Wilson often puts in—soliciting money, sitting on the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Intelligence Committee, and taking care of constituents—she faces a grueling weekly commute that takes seven hours each way (if all goes smoothly) between her studio in Washington and her full-time residence in Albuquerque. Wilson's family is used to this: her daughter, Cait, was just over eighteen months old when her mother first won federal office, and by age three she had developed a hand signal to use when she wanted undivided attention in the face of Wilson's official demands: she clenches her hand in a fist, like an O, and then splays her three middle

not Congress is in session. (Many Hill watchers wonder how the sixty-six-year-old Pelosi can toil so hard while remaining immaculately dressed and consistently perky. One answer: massive consumption of high-quality chocolate.) Pelosi's schedule between 1:15 p.m. on Friday, June 23, and 9:00 p.m. on Monday, June 26, featured stops in Providence; Cambridge, Massachusetts; San Juan; Pittsburgh; and Washington, D.C., and included five fund-raisers, three media appearances, two official meetings, one charity event, and a dinner for members of Congress that she hosted in her own home. During that single eighty-hour period, she raised \$1 million for House Democrats. House Speaker Dennis Hastert is working just as hard: by election day he will have campaigned for at least 200 House Republicans—which is to say, nearly all of them.

Shays doesn't complain about putting so much into coddling constituents and performing other official duties, noting, "Nobody *makes* you run for this." But having fought against his own leadership for seven years to pass campaign-finance reform, and having been deprived—as punishment for his success—of the committee chairmanship he was due to inherit, he sometimes wonders why he is being tagged as a Republican clone. In the pettiness and intensity of its malice, the House has begun to resemble the 1989 dark comedy *Heathers*, with elected officials in the role of high-school girls. Because one

Democrat doesn't want her party to know that she's discussing policy with Shays, he has to call her on his cell phone when they are on the House floor, instead of talking with her directly. One moderate Democrat, whose party leaders barred him from working with Shays because it could boost the Connecticut lawmaker's reelection prospects, says he does not understand why top Democrats outlawed such collaborations as early as May. "It used to be you were able to govern until Labor Day," he said. "Now it's absolute warfare."

That atmosphere has prompted some of the most serious, policy-minded lawmakers to exit the political stage. Democrat Tim Roemer, a former representative from Indiana who has four children between the ages of six and thirteen, decided to retire in 2002 because the personal sacrifices were no longer worth the meager policy gains he could eke out. He now heads the Center for National Policy, teaches at George Mason University, and lectures on national-security issues. Roemer says:

When you're sitting in a VFW hall in a small town in Indiana at nine o'clock at night and you've missed a baseball game, a play, or one of your children's first words, you're scratching your head, thinking, "Why in the world am I working so hard to get back to Washington, where I can't get much done?" I'm very happy with the decision I've made. That makes me a little bit sad. It's sort of a sad reflection on what the place has become.

to a study released by Public Citizen's Congress Watch last year, nearly half of all lawmakers now reentering the private sector become lobbyists—a move that makes good financial sense when you consider that lobbyists charge new clients almost twice as much now as they did six years ago.

The Hill's nasty environment has, of course, not only demoralized members of Congress; it has also alienated voters. Peter Hart, a prominent Democratic pollster who, with Republican Bill McInturff, regularly surveys voters for NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, released polls in July showing that just 33 percent of respondents approved of the Republican Party. But the Democratic Party didn't have much to crow about: it had an approval rating of just 32 percent in these same surveys. Voters "see what's happening. They are repulsed, turned off by it," Hart says. California Democratic Representative Bob Filner, a former civil-rights activist and history professor at San Diego State University, waxes nostalgic for the days immediately after September 11, when Americans suddenly developed a sense of respect for government officials: "I could walk into a room with other elected officials, and there would be a standing ovation. I would turn around and wonder who was there."

Filner's nostalgia notwithstanding, the price of restoring public respect for Congress is more lawmakers losing their jobs more often. This prescription might seem paradoxical, given the nastiness of close races. But it's hard to instill broad accountability in elected officials whose political livelihoods are assured as long as they cater to ideological

Representatives who must answer to a wider constituency to win reelection are more likely to reach across the aisle to solve their constituents', and their country's, problems.

For his part, Shays sometimes envies close friends who have reaped massive rewards by opting out of an increasingly bitter political game. James C. Greenwood, a Pennsylvania Republican, fought many of the same legislative battles as Shays before he decided to leave Congress altogether and take the helm of the Biotechnology Industry Organization in January 2005. "He's doing what he loves, and he's earning nearly \$900,000 a year," Shays says as he gets out of the car for his next campaign stop, an adult minor-league baseball game in Bridgeport. "He's making \$70,000 a month. Think about that."

One of the only times former House Majority Leader Richard K. Armey got truly angry at his executive assistant was when she decided, in response to public criticism that lawmakers earned too much money, to calculate how much Armey earned an hour. She established that it averaged \$3.57. "Don't you dare tell my wife," said the Texas Republican. He now makes close to \$1 million a year, giving speeches and working as a rainmaker at the international law firm DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary. As work conditions in Congress become more disheartening, the prospect of reaping a financial windfall as a lobbyist becomes more alluring. According

extremists. Only through the spread of competitive districts can the House as an institution regain the habits of comity and cooperation that have made it an effective legislative body. Representatives who must answer to a wider constituency to win reelection are more likely to reach across the aisle to solve their constituents', and their country's, problems. Over time, such a shift in climate may make the job less grueling and more appealing to people like Christopher Shays, Collin Peterson, and Heather Wilson.

For now, Wilson still likes her job, particularly when she feels she's actively helping voters in her district: she recently got a letter from a woman who said that without Wilson's help in securing veteran's disability benefits for her husband, the couple would have lost their home. Wilson keeps the letter in her desk in the Cannon Office Building, because occasionally her constituents ask her how she manages to do the people's business in Washington while also raising her children with her husband in Albuquerque, and running a costly reelection campaign. It's a question she herself ponders at times.

"The question isn't *how*," Wilson says. "That's a matter of logistics. The question is *why*." ▀

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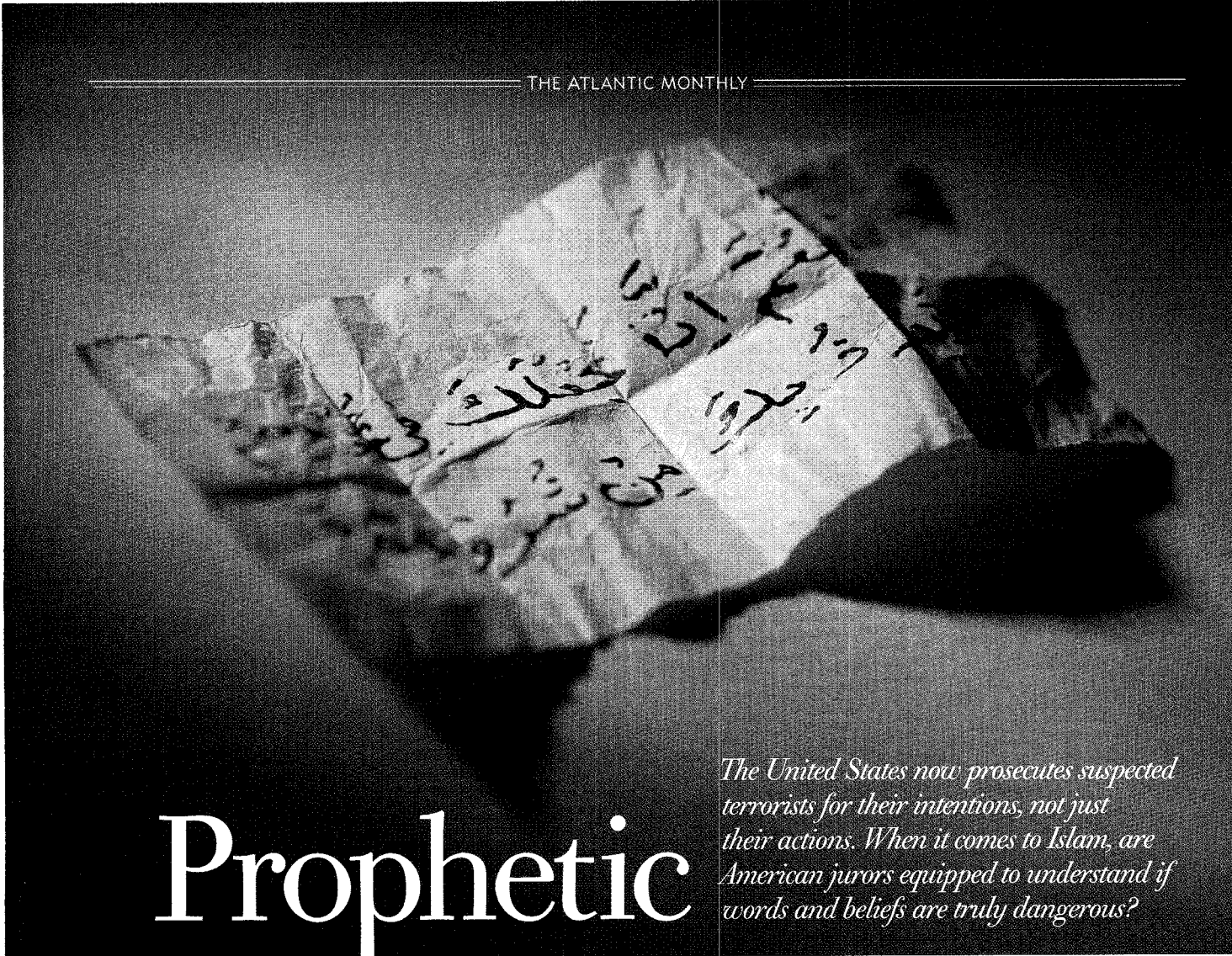
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Prophetic Justice

The United States now prosecutes suspected terrorists for their intentions, not just their actions. When it comes to Islam, are American jurors equipped to understand if words and beliefs are truly dangerous?

BY AMY WALDMAN

At the age of twenty-two, Hamid Hayat appeared to be adrift on two continents. He slacked, by turns, in his hometown of Lodi, California, and in his family's home country, Pakistan. Having lived for roughly equal amounts of time in each, he seemed without direction in either. But on June 5, 2005, the young American offered up alarming evidence of personal initiative: after hours of questioning at the FBI's Sacramento office, he confessed that he had attended a terrorist training camp in Pakistan and returned to the United States to wage jihad. In quick succession came his arrest, a packed press conference, and his indictment—and suddenly, it was all over but the trial.

Hayat's case presented a peculiar challenge for the prosecution, which needed to show not just that he had trained in Pakistan and concealed doing so, but that he had intended to commit terrorism. Yet the only direct proof of any of this was Hayat's videotaped confession, which was as irresolute as his life. The slender, deferential

young man repeatedly contradicted himself. He parroted the answers that agents suggested. And the details of any terrorist plan were scant and fuzzy.

The government said that its direct evidence was limited because it had intercepted Hayat so early in the process. "This is not a case where a building has been blown up, and, you know, the forensic investigators go in, they go looking through the rubble looking for clues," one prosecutor, David Deitch, told jurors. "This isn't that kind of case. This is a charge that allows the FBI to prevent acts of violence like that." Would Americans, he asked, want any less?

To prove intent, then, the government had to turn to the rubble of Hayat's life—an accretion of circumstantial but ugly evidence that prosecutors said proved "a jihadi heart and a jihadi mind." There were Hayat's words, taped by an informant, in which he praised the murder and mutilation of the journalist Daniel Pearl: "They killed him—I'm so pleased about that. They cut him

Amy Waldman is a national correspondent at The Atlantic.

REPRODUCTION OF HAMID HAYAT'S TAPING, PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID HILLS

into pieces and sent him back ... That was a good job they did—now they can't send one Jewish person to Pakistan." There was what the prosecution called Hayat's "frequently expressed hatred toward the United States"; his comment that his heart "belongs to Pakistan"; his description of President Bush as "the worm." There was, at his house, literature by a virulent Pakistani militant and a scrapbook of clippings celebrating both the Taliban and sectarian violence.

And folded in his wallet was a scrap of paper on which was written a squib of Arabic. Prosecutors first translated the words as "Lord, let us be at their throats, and we ask you to give us refuge from their evil," and then amended it, after the defense protested, to "Oh Allah, we place you at their throats, and we seek refuge in you from their evil." But regardless of the translation, the interpretation of what the government called the "jihadist note" never changed. The prosecution cited it as "probative evidence" that Hayat had "the requisite jihadist intent" when he attended the training camp and then returned to America.

The note became a kind of leitmotif in the case. Weighing a request for bail by Hayat's father, who had been charged with lying about his son's training, U.S. Magistrate Judge Gregory G. Hollows wrote:

The allegations depict Hamid as one who would be ruthless in his disregard for human life if and when ordered to do so on account of a "religious" philosophy. Although religion can form the basis of mankind's most noble deeds, it can also have the effect attributed to it by Pascal: "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction." The scrap of paper found in Hamid's wallet certainly speaks to the latter category.

An expert witness for the prosecution testified that the prayer would be carried around, as a prosecutor recapped, "by a holy warrior, a violent jihadi, who felt himself to be traveling in an enemy land, and who was ready to commit violent jihad." That exposition resonated with at least some jurors, who speculated that the paper might be Hayat's graduation certificate from the terrorist training camp. The prayer encapsulated everything they feared about the power and danger of religious conviction, and it helped ensure, after a ten-week trial, Hayat's criminal conviction.

The September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon prompted a fundamental shift in the American government's approach to Islamic terrorism. Before 9/11, the government largely responded to attacks that had already occurred—by launching cruise missiles at terrorist bases in Afghanistan and Sudan after the 1998 embassy bombings in Africa, for example, or by prosecuting the planners and perpetrators of those bombings in federal court. (The notable exception was the trial and conviction in 1995 of Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman—the "blind sheikh"—for "seditious conspiracy" to blow up New York landmarks.) But after 9/11, the focus turned to prevention.

Abroad, the government has pursued a doctrine of preemptive war. At home, it has pursued a strategy of what might be called preemptive prosecution. The criminal-justice system, the Justice Department said in a recent white paper on counterterrorism, now "operates effectively as an element of national power." The goal has become to stop another terrorist attack before it happens. In 2002, the FBI told its fifty-six field offices they could no longer set their own law-enforcement priorities: the top priority for every office was preventing another attack. McGregor W. Scott, the U.S. attorney who prosecuted Hamid Hayat, says that then Attorney General John Ashcroft told him during their first meeting after Scott's appointment, "Your job is to prevent further acts of terrorism."

That job—a real-life, never-ending version of the television show *24*—has weighed heavily on agents and prosecutors, in part because they have been ill-equipped to perform it. Trained in the classic art of whodunit—collecting fingerprints, interviewing bank tellers after a robbery, trying the purported robber—agents and prosecutors now have to figure out who *will* do it.

This preemptive strategy represents a major moral and legal change in the American approach to justice. Its premise is that terrorism—implicitly, *Islamic* terrorism—represents a singular, unprecedented threat to American safety and society. Testifying before Congress in 2004, Paul Rosenzweig of the Heritage Foundation paraphrased a well-known maxim, saying, "It is better that ten guilty go free than that one innocent be mistakenly punished." September 11 changed the paradigm, he argued, and now, "we simply cannot afford a rule that 'Better ten terrorists go undetected than that the conduct of one innocent be mistakenly examined.'"

The notion of preemptive prosecution is, of course, not without precedent. McGregor Scott notes that we prosecute felons for possession of firearms to stop them before they can use guns to commit a violent crime. David Cole, a professor at Georgetown University Law Center, cites the indictment of Al Capone for tax fraud as a "pretextual prosecution"—the government couldn't get him for more serious crimes—whose effect was also to prevent future crimes. Paul Robinson, a law professor at the University of Pennsylvania, argued even before 9/11 that the lengthy incarceration of habitual offenders was more about preventing future crimes than about punishing past ones, and warned against the ambiguity of punishing "dangerousness."

The 9/11 attacks made this shift explicit for one category of crime and, in practice, largely for one category of American. In search of potential terrorists, the government has cast a broad net across the country's Muslim communities, often relying on undercover informants. This has led to hundreds of legal cases against Pakistani, Saudi, Moroccan, Algerian, Palestinian, Yemeni, and American Muslims. In many instances, the prosecutions have been pretextual: charges of lying to law-enforcement agents, fraud, money laundering, and, often, immigration violations. But a number of prosecutions, like Hayat's, have been explicitly preemptive: cases against individuals the government said were

planning to commit terrorist acts or were encouraging or supporting others to do so.

The Bush administration did not seek legislation to authorize its new preemptive approach, instead relying on existing, if previously little used, laws. Key among these were two statutes—passed in 1994 and 1996 respectively—barring “material support” of terrorism, which can mean anything from personnel to funds. The laws, which were expanded under post-9/11 legislation, allow the government to bring terrorism-related charges even when no terrorism has occurred.

Deputy Attorney General Paul McNulty said in a recent press briefing that he encouraged prosecutors to bring charges against would-be terrorists as early as possible. But that approach can be at odds with prosecutorial success: the earlier you intervene to stop a suspected crime, the less proof you have that a crime was going to be committed. “As a prosecutor, you probably don’t have as much evidence of guilt [as] you would if the thing were much further along,” McGregor Scott, the U.S. attorney in Sacramento, says. “We don’t have [the defendant] in the rental van with a whole bunch of C4 [explosives] in the back driving to the federal building.” Whether that points to a lack of evidence or a lack of guilt, it presents prosecutors with a practical problem: how to prove that a suspect who has not committed a violent crime is dangerous enough to convict. In the armed felon’s case, the measure of dangerousness—proven past bad acts—is at least clear. But most terrorism defendants have not had previous convictions. Determining their intent, therefore, is what David Cole calls an “inevitably speculative endeavor.”

The government has sought to demonstrate danger in two ways. The first is through acts, such as training, that are seen as preparatory to terrorism (but not concrete or defined enough to result in conspiracy or other overt charges). The second is through speech, belief, or association—documented through the defendants’ words or material found in their possession—that suggests sympathy or support for terrorism. In case after case, the government has sought to prove allegiance to a radical Islamist philosophy that supports violence in Allah’s name. Much of the evidence, as a result, is religious in nature.

The government’s professed target is extremist dogma. But, as Mary Habeck notes in *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror*, extremists have gained traction precisely because their dogma finds its roots in Islam’s sacred texts—the Koran and hadith, the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad as documented by his companions—and in subsequent interpretations of Islam. That continuum of religious dogma presents a challenge for Islam, but also for the American court system, where the effort to try terrorist extremism has arguably resulted in the trial of Islam itself.

In 1925, John Scopes went on trial for teaching evolution in Dayton, Tennessee. The judge limited the number of experts testifying on the truth of evolution, saying it was irrelevant to proving whether Scopes had taught it. But lawyers on both sides—Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryan—virtually conspired to put fundamentalism on trial, as

Sadakat Kadri recounts in his book *The Trial*. At Darrow’s request, Bryan took the stand as a biblical expert, saying, “They came here to try revealed religion. I am here to defend it, and they can ask me any questions they please.”

In their exploration of Islam, the recent terrorism trials have had a similar, if perhaps less circuslike, feel. The prosecution introduces beliefs into evidence, and the defense challenges the meaning or significance of those beliefs. Expert witnesses in Islam then fight pitched battles of interpretation for each side. Some of the experts are mainstream scholars, others outliers with unconventional views. Together, they make up a small but often lucrative cottage industry where their expertise can command \$200 an hour or more. In the courtroom, they create a theological thicket that may be shaped as much by their own agendas and perspectives as by the facts of the cases.

Jurors have been schooled in the difference between fatwa (religious edict), and *fatah* (conquest). They have had tutorials in the history of Islam, from the angel Gabriel’s revelation of the Koran to the Prophet Muhammad to the rise of Osama bin Laden. They have learned about the meaning of *bida*, or innovation; the authentic chain of transmission for a hadith; and the virgins awaiting a martyr in paradise.

Such a thorough judicial disquisition of a religion has no modern parallel in America. Unless religious beliefs bear directly on guilt—the use of the illegal drug peyote in religious rituals, for example—they are generally barred from trials as prejudicial. Why have the rules changed? Because, as Aziz Huq, a lawyer at New York University’s Brennan Center for Justice, puts it, in recent times no other religion has been “so intimately linked in the public mind to violence.” Since 9/11, judges have given lawyers wide latitude to bring religion into the courtroom.

This surfeit of information on Islam is being presented to non-Muslim jurors who in large part operate from ignorance. Most Americans can parse the differences among Catholics, Holy Rollers, and followers of Jerry Falwell, but when it comes to Islam they know only that “there are terrorists, and then there are good Muslims,” says David Nevin, a criminal-defense lawyer.

Nevin successfully defended a Saudi graduate student, Sami al-Hussayen, who was tried in Idaho in 2004 for helping to manage Web sites containing jihad-related material. He recalls asking a pool of 150 potential jurors how many of them had ever known a Muslim. Only four or five people raised their hands, and all of them were vetoed as jurors by the prosecution. Nevin compares what followed to the *Far Side* cartoon in which a dog faces a jury of cats.

He analogizes Islam in his and other terrorism cases to the bogeyman—the frightening unknown. Talking about Islam in court is a way to prey on a jury’s fears, he argues—the equivalent of repeating the words *brain damage* to a jury in a malpractice case. Some prosecutors have invoked the violence in Islam’s history to indict modern defendants, or have suggested that Muslims may be prone to lying. On the whole, American judges have been unwilling to rule such assertions more prejudicial than probative.

The understanding of Islam in the courtroom is also clouded by the crisis of authority in the religion itself. For centuries, the Koran was rarely translated out of Arabic, giving authority to those—usually religious scholars, or *ulama*—with command of the language. In the past half century or so, the Koran has been more widely translated—or “interpreted,” since Muslims don’t believe it can be literally translated—and that has opened its interpretation to the layperson. The Internet, meanwhile, allows anyone to disseminate texts, opinions, and fatwas—and gain a following. And clerical authority has waned as places like Cairo’s Al-Azhar University, the heart of Islamic learning, have put themselves in the service of secular state interests.

In the Idaho trial, one expert witness, Reuven Paz, provided an apt example of this last trend. In 1956, Paz said, religious leaders at Al-Azhar gave Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser a fatwa prohibiting any possibility of peace with the Jews. In 1978, different clerics at Al-Azhar gave Anwar Sadat “a fatwa that actually legitimized peace with Israel, and basically upon only just a different interpretation of mostly the same verses of the same hadith.”

The debates within Islam also concern who has the right or authority to do the interpreting. Men like bin Laden—who lacks religious credentials—now issue or order up a

terrorism and within Islam. With only limited evidence of a possible plot, prosecutors tried to link the defendants to what the indictment called a “transnational network of radical Islamists.” In a lengthy introduction, the indictment described Salafiya, a movement that aims to emulate the first generation of Muslims, by saying that it wages constant “global jihad” to conquer infidel areas. The indictment cited bin Laden’s fatwa against “Jews and Crusaders,” and the fatwa of Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman against American civilian targets, although no evidence tied either to the defendants. (The indictment also noted that the campaign against the Soviets in Afghanistan drew extremists who “were encouraged to engage in jihad as an essential element of their religious duty.” The prosecution did not say that the United States had provided that encouragement, along with funding and weapons. In a number of terrorism trials, the anti-Soviet resistance that the United States actively backed has been used as proof of violent zealotry.)

In truth, the only possible link between the defendants and the ideology of “global jihad”—beyond the defendants’ Islamic faith and an unreliable informant’s assertions—was 105 Arabic-language tapes found in the defendants’ apartment, mostly containing the speech of an Egyptian preacher named Osama al-Kousi. There was no proof that the defen-

When Muslims themselves cannot agree on what so many aspects of their faith mean, how can American jurors?

fatwa. Extremists proclaim their right to interpret Islamic texts. And clerics no longer have the authority to repudiate such interpretations.

Any judicial proceeding involves a search for facts, and trials often hinge on whose experts a jury finds more credible. But the effort seems fraught when it comes to the volatile question of religion, especially one in such tumult. In search of religious truth, lawyers, judges, and jurors who know almost nothing about Islam must wade through multiple layers of translation—from Arabic to English; from the spiritual to the secular; from the metaphorical to the literal. When Muslims themselves cannot agree on what so many aspects of their faith mean, how can American jurors?

Six days after the 9/11 attacks, a group of agents from the Detroit Joint Terrorism Task Force searched an apartment in pursuit of a man on the FBI’s terrorist “watch list.” What they found instead were three North African men—a fourth would eventually be arrested—and material the government believed pointed to terrorist planning. The men, the indictment said, “operated as a covert underground support unit for terrorist attacks within and outside the United States, as well as a ‘sleeper’ operational combat cell.”

The trial that followed in 2003 provided a dramatic illustration of the battles of interpretation in the war on

terrorism. But al-Kousi’s philosophy became a point of heated contention between the prosecution and the defense; indeed, al-Kousi became a phantom defendant of sorts. Four expert witnesses—two for the prosecution and two for the defense—offered their opinions on his discourse. (“I think the jury will be overjoyed to hear another expert on Islamic fundamentalism,” U.S. District Judge Gerald E. Rosen quipped in advance of yet more testimony.)

Khaled Abou El Fadl, a prominent Islamic scholar, was a witness for the prosecution. El Fadl is of Egyptian origin, was educated at Yale, Princeton, and the University of Pennsylvania, and is now a law professor at UCLA. At one point he testified that al-Kousi described certain jurists or scholars as mistaken or heretical, and others as good jurists—the real scholars: “And that’s a very important theme throughout these tapes—who are the real people that you should listen to, and who are the real scholars you should listen to, and the people that are pretend scholars, not real scholars.”

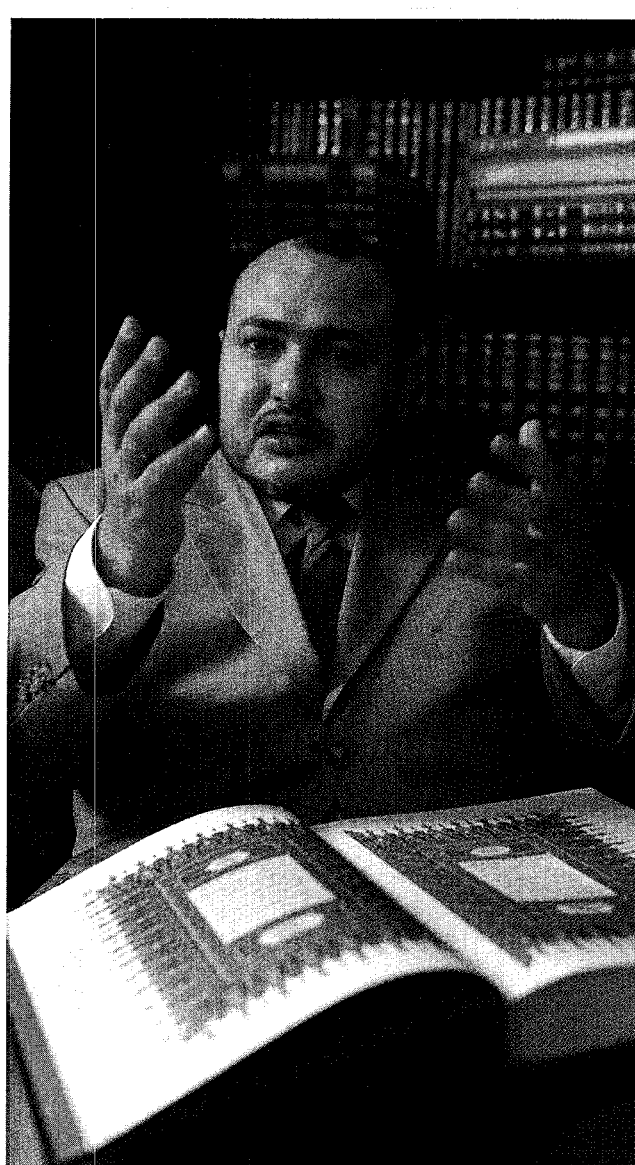
El Fadl might as well have been talking about the trial’s dueling experts. Over days of testimony, they presented opposite interpretations not only of the tapes but also of Salafism, the sect of Islam that al-Kousi followed. They sparred over the meaning of “economic jihad,” and the beliefs of Ibn Taymiyya, an important thirteenth-century

Muslim thinker. They talked about the fragmentation within Islam—and came to embody it themselves.

First for the prosecution came Walid Phares, a Lebanese Christian academic who emigrated to the United States in 1990, at the end of Lebanon's civil war between Muslims and Christians. In Lebanon, Phares's political activities included participation in the Lebanese Forces, a coalition of right-wing Christian militias that the defense said the U.S. State Department had labeled anti-Muslim. El Fadl, his fellow prosecution witness, calls Phares an "Islamophobe," and at trial the defense sought to demonstrate as much. By his own characterization, Phares, an associate professor at Florida Atlantic University, was outside the academic mainstream until 9/11. But since the attacks, he has become a prominent public commentator on the dangers of "jihadism." He is an analyst on MSNBC, the author of *Future Jihad: Terrorist Strategies Against America*, and a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

As an expert, he brought more certainty than depth to the stand. He conceded that he had listened to some of the al-Kousi tapes while driving, and one while jogging. Much of his knowledge of Salafism had come from the Internet. He testified that he had never been to Saudi Arabia, Yemen, or Egypt; had never taken a course in the Koran or hadith; and had never been to a Salafi mosque. Phares himself revealed the limits of his kind of expertise. He and the defense experts disagreed about whether *taqiya*—religiously sanctioned dissimulation—would be practiced by Sunnis, which the defendants were, or, as the defense argued, only by Shiites. To prove his point, Phares brandished an article from *USA Today* about Pakistani men at a Karachi mosque preparing to come to America to blend in as a "sleeper cell." The article, he said, was an example of modern Sunnis practicing *taqiya*. The defense was skeptical—*USA Today* was hardly scholarly literature, the lawyers asserted—but the judge allowed Phares to testify that he had read in the press that *taqiya* was being practiced in North America, by Sunnis.

As it turned out, the article's author was Jack Kelley, whose career with *USA Today* ended in the spring of 2004, when the paper concluded that "at least 20 of his stories contained fabrications and that he also lifted at least 100 passages, without attribution, from other publications." The story Phares invoked was "among those cited," a correction attached to it says. According to the paper, "U.S. consulate officials in Karachi, Pakistan, said they could not verify the existence of the specific mosque Kelley described"—which would suggest that the young men inside it were equally unverifiable. Presented to the jury as truth, the article was, in fact, a mirage. Phares couldn't have known that when he testified—but when I met with him this year, he was still citing the Kelley story. As to the tapes, Phares's testimony was unequivocal: al-Kousi was a Salafi, he said, and thus by definition supported violence. Phares agreed with the prosecutor's statement that the Salafi philosophy "advocates violence against the non-Islamic world to achieve an Islamic world order."



Khaled Abou El Fadl

The defense painted a different picture of both al-Kousi and Salafism. Wael Hallaq, a professor of Islamic law at Montreal's McGill University, called al-Kousi the "ultimate pacifist" and a critic of radicals. Al-Kousi, Hallaq said, considered himself a better Salafi than those who advocate violence. Hallaq is an Arab Christian, educated in Israel. The second defense expert, Bernard Haykel, is an associate professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic studies at New York University and has a doctorate from Oxford. He is the son of a French Lebanese Christian and a Polish Jewish Holocaust survivor. Defense attorneys on terrorism cases have generally avoided Muslim experts, fearing that juries will not find them credible. Prosecutors have tended to favor them. Each side, El Fadl says, is playing to the jury's prejudices. Some Muslim (and even non-Muslim) scholars also fear testifying for the defense, lest they attract government scrutiny. In part because of his mixed heritage, Haykel, who has participated in at least three major terrorism trials, is a "dream witness," according to one defense lawyer.

Haykel has specialized in Salafism, doing extensive field research in Yemen, and he disputed Phares's interpretation that mainstream Salafism was violent. At one point, the

AP PHOTO/DAVID J. PHILLIPS

prosecution asked him whether he agreed with the statement, "The Salafist philosophy advocates violence against a non-Islamic world to achieve an Islamic world order." He replied, "I agree that it applies to the radical Salafism, not to the mainstream Salafists." Haykel further said that "Mainstream Salafists advocate a strict adherence to Islamic ritual law," and "total obedience to the ruler of the state they live in." They oppose electoral politics and political parties, and aim to convert the Muslim world to their way of understanding Islam "through preaching and teaching and propaganda."

Haykel did not agree that al-Kousi was the "ultimate pacifist," as Hallaq had maintained, but he did say that al-Kousi opposed jihadis. And he tried to explain why much of what al-Kousi said was not to be taken literally. The reason for this, Haykel said, lay in the character of religious, and specifically Islamic, speech. Al-Kousi, for example, used rhetorical devices common to polemical speech, such as quoting his opponents in order to rebut them. The prosecution, Haykel argued, treated al-Kousi's recitation of his opponents' positions as his own. Haykel also went out of his way to distinguish between religious and political speech. In religious speech, he testified, Muslim leaders or scholars say things that would sound very objectionable to most Americans and non-Muslims. Sometimes "very bad things are said about non-Muslims," he continued, "but that's religious speech; [it] doesn't actually lead to actual political activism or engagement."

THE COURT: How does one distinguish that to—for example, to—the American ear? How does one distinguish that?

HAYKEL: It's not easy. You'd have to be trained, like I am, in deciphering that kind of talk. It's like listening to an evangelical Christian. If you don't know the context, it's difficult to know what they're actually talking about. You might think that something is much more extreme than it actually is. The ... followers of these movements, students know, and their enemies know, exactly what is being said, because of the pitch, the sources that are mentioned, and so on.

I met with Haykel and asked him to expand on these distinctions. Haykel had testified that when al-Kousi said infidels should be put to death, the Egyptian preacher meant that an Islamic state, not individuals, should carry out that punishment. Similarly, Haykel told me, some of al-Kousi's statements that sounded violent were actually invocations to God, not exhortations to fellow humans. Asking God to kill enemies or Jews or Americans was not the same as telling people to do so. "You're not giving directives to the congregation to go and engage in violence," Haykel said.

Bin Laden, he said, made similar prayers, but then took it a step further by telling Muslims they had a duty to kill. According to Haykel, al-Kousi never took that step: "He was very clear when he was actually saying you should do something versus what he hoped God would do or

he hoped would eventually happen with God's intercession." Real jihadists, he said, are "absolutely explicit when they intend violence. There is no obfuscation, there is no double entendre."

Haykel's argument, in other words, was that there were clear standards for dangerous religious speech. For much of the twentieth century, the United States wrestled with the question of when speech became so dangerous that it should be stripped of constitutional protection. The government prosecuted people for seditious speech during World War I (some were only recently exonerated, posthumously). During the Red Scare, membership in the Communist Party—and speech and literature in its defense—merited prosecution under the Smith Act, a federal statute that was upheld at the time by the Supreme Court. Partly in response to that history, the Supreme Court in 1969 laid down the clearest standard yet for legally impermissible speech. In *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, the Court said prohibited speech had to be "directed at inciting or producing imminent lawless action," and it had to be "likely to incite or produce such action."

The rhetoric of Islamic extremism may present the toughest challenge for that standard since its establishment. The question lapping at the trials' edges—and sometimes at their core—is how the law should deal with language that does not incite but, through a long slow process, indoctrinates. On the continuum between word and deed, belief and action, where do we draw the legal lines?

Al-Kousi, the subject of so much expert testimony in the Detroit case, himself helped to frame the debate. As the experts recounted, al-Kousi describes on the tapes two kinds of terrorism, intellectual and physical, and says that the former lays the groundwork for the latter. Bloodshed begins with words, he says repeatedly. As Hallaq put al-Kousi's point, "Terrorism can begin with an innocent word—or something that looks like an innocent word."

Was al-Kousi warning against intellectual terrorism, or engaging in it? On this, the experts disagreed. Phares said al-Kousi was providing "a mountain of ideological buildup." Nothing on the tapes called for an attack on the United States, Phares said, but the rhetoric legitimized one. Hallaq and Haykel, in contrast, insisted that al-Kousi was warning against the danger of intellectual terrorism. On the reality of that danger there is less dispute. Phares argues that 90 percent of Islamic terrorism is the nonviolent preparation for acts of violence. The war on terrorism "is a war of ideas, at the end of the day," he said when I met him at MSNBC, where he was the analyst in residence on a gray Saturday. Haykel, in turn, said when we met two months later:

I think it's true that jihadism comes with a whole apparatus of propaganda, a whole worldview, a set of ideas, and a way of indoctrinating these ideas into people. People don't blow themselves up just because they wake up one morning. They need preparation. They need to be inculcated with certain views and ideas, and jihadism is very good about that.

That inculcation has ample source material, Haykel said, because many hadith and Koranic verses seem to advocate violence; most Muslims just know not to take them literally. Is it possible, he was asked during cross-examination, that someone radically inclined might take al-Kousi's words as a call to action? "Well, the Koran can be taken as a call to action," Haykel answered. "You don't need to listen to al-Kousi."

Religious speech is extreme, emotional, and motivational. It is anti-literal, relying on metaphor, allusion, and other rhetorical devices, and it assumes knowledge within a community of believers. Its potency is deliberate: faith is about calling on a higher power, one stronger than ourselves, and the very language we use helps inflate that strength. We arm ourselves (itself a violent metaphor) with prayer.

This is hardly unique to Islam. The question of how to interpret a text may be as old as writing, and it applies equally to determining where the power of religious speech inheres. In authorial intent? A reader's interpretation? Historical or modern context? Over the centuries, and even today, the Bible and Christian theology have helped justify the Crusades, slavery, violence against gays, and the murder of doctors who perform abortions. The words themselves are latent, inert, harmless—until they aren't.

Our current circumstances beg the question so acutely because America has been a target, and because most

Americans are not Muslim. "God damn you!" sounds fine to us, as does "Onward, Christian Soldiers." "Allah, we place you at their throats" does not. If the words themselves were to be labeled dangerous, Haykel asked me, "why not ban the Koran?" An expert, he argued, could distinguish between rhetoric and practice—or, in these cases, between violent words and violent intent. But he was skeptical that prosecutors, judges, and jurors involved in terrorism trials would be able to correctly ascertain where ideology shaded into criminality. Nor was it clear that even experts could: after all, where Haykel saw harmless speech, El Fadl saw malignity. In the Detroit case, El Fadl conceded that al-Kousi's words were protected speech. But such speech can still be evidence at trial—and indeed, the tapes had helped convince El Fadl of the defendants' guilt.

El Fadl has written extensively on how puritans have hijacked Islam—an opinion he wields with such vehemence that some in academia believe his emotion has clouded his analysis. "As an American, as a Muslim, I want these terrorists captured and put in jail," El Fadl said when we met at his UCLA office, where Islamic texts lined the walls, classical music played, cigarillo smoke filled the air, and his tiny blind dog roamed the floor. Wary of witch hunts against Muslims, he had gone to great lengths to assure himself the case was solid before agreeing to testify. He went over all of the evidence with the prosecutor, who told him that the defendants were "100 percent guilty." He listened to all of al-Kousi's tapes. He decided, he told me, that the defendants' behavior "fit more in the m.o. of a terrorist cell than orthodox puritan Muslims." He took no money for his testimony. He was convinced—and he testified—that al-Kousi advocated a violent philosophy and had misinterpreted hadith to justify it. El Fadl said al-Kousi espoused an "intolerant, puritanical, fanatic, extremist, literalist" position, and that he legitimated violence by dehumanizing his enemies.

Jurors seemed to see the case much as El Fadl did, and they convicted two of the defendants on the material-support charge. Then, in 2004, the government said that a prosecutor in the case, Richard Convertino, had withheld exculpatory evidence from the defense, and it asked for the terrorism convictions to be thrown out. The judge agreed. This past March, amid a major feud between the Justice Department and Convertino, a grand jury indicted Convertino for withholding evidence.

For Haykel, the reversal of the convictions vindicated his sense that the men were innocent and had been picked up just because they were Muslims in the wrong place right after 9/11. Phares, in turn, continued to insist on the tapes' "jihadist nature." El Fadl did not even know that the convictions had been overturned, or the prosecutor indicted, until I told him this spring. The news, he said, deeply depressed him, and the day after we met at UCLA he called and asked me to come to his house to discuss the case further.

Although El Fadl thought that the indictment was Islamophobic, he also felt that Convertino was ethical. El Fadl insisted that, even though the indictment stood, Convertino

HALF MOON, SMALL CLOUD

Caught out in daylight, a rabbit's
transparent pallor, the moon
is paired with a cloud of equal weight:
the heavenly congruence startles.

For what is the moon, that it haunts us,
this impudent companion immigrated
from the system's less fortunate margins,
the realm of dust collected in orbs?

We grow up as children with it, a nursemaid
of a bonneted sort, round-faced and kind,
not burning too close like parents, or too far
to spare even a glance, like movie stars.

No star but in the zodiac of stars,
a stranger there, too big, it begs for love
(the man in it) and yet is diaphanous,
its thereness as mysterious as ours.

—JOHN UPDIKE

John Updike's recent books include Terrorist, a novel, and Still Looking: Essays on American Art. His latest collection of poems is Americana (2001).

had come to see it his way. (The indictment was later found to have been partly copied from a scholar's article on Islamic fundamentalism.) Convertino was the best of the prosecutors who had approached him to testify, El Fadl said: "If I can't trust him, then I don't want to play."

For El Fadl, the saga reinforced the difficulty of being a Muslim public intellectual in America today—of being forced to choose sides. He has been assailed by Muslims for his opposition to puritans, and called a "stealth Islamist" by the columnist Daniel Pipes, who polices American Muslims' speech for signs of extremism. He has received numerous death threats, especially after his testimony in Detroit, and says someone fired a bullet into his house earlier this year. He describes living a life "so charged that every time you act there are 1,000 people interpreting that act."

But the case's outcome also reinforced the difficulty of divining intent. El Fadl is a Muslim, a scholar of Islam, far more knowledgeable than any juror—and yet he, too,

did not impress the jurors. Neither did his scrapbook filled with articles about the Taliban, jihad, and anti-Shia violence, nor the books by Masood Azhar, one of Pakistan's most extreme militant leaders, that were found at his house. All of this—explicated by an expert on the stand—became evidence of his mind-set.

And so, of course, did the prayer from his wallet: "Oh Allah, we place you at their throats, and we seek refuge in you from their evil." So critical did the prosecution believe the prayer was to its case that it called an expert, Khaleel Mohammed, a Guyanese-born, Saudi-trained scholar, to interpret it, at \$250 an hour. Mohammed is an assistant professor of religious studies at San Diego State University and is best known for asserting that, according to the Koran, Israel belongs to the Jews. Most other Islamic scholars find that position politically unpalatable and scholastically indefensible. As a result, Mohammed is quite possibly more popular with Jewish groups than with Muslim ones.

Most terrorism defendants have not had previous convictions. Determining their intent, therefore, is what David Cole calls an "inevitably speculative endeavor."

appeared to have misread the "dangerousness" of the Detroit defendants. What did it mean, then, to ask jurors who are ignorant and fearful of Islam to judge the nature of a Muslim's beliefs? The risk of misinterpretation runs both ways: extremists can twist religious language, but prosecutors can also see that language as more extreme than it is. Nothing convinced me of this risk more than Hamid Hayat's trial, and the role played by the prayer found in his wallet.

The prosecution's exploration of what it called Hayat's "jihadi mind-set" occupied a significant portion of Hayat's trial in Sacramento this spring. Some of the evidence came from comments Hayat had made while conversing with an informant, Naseem Khan, who at the FBI's behest had worn a wire and posed as an extremist. As in the Idaho case, prosecutors suggested that terrorism created new standards for dangerous speech, in which the endorsement of violence was as problematic as the incitement of it. Hayat's speech was "not mere political discourse," the prosecutor David Deitch argued, saying:

Hamid Hayat, like anybody, is welcome to have different views about American policies or about the policies of any country. But when you consider the evidence in this case, consider his views on violence, consider his views about the appropriateness of violence against the enemies of Islam, against what he viewed as the enemies of Islam, and that includes the United States.

The defense tried to argue that Hayat's speech was common in Pakistan, where he had spent much of his life. That

His testimony on the supplication was clear, consistent, and definitive.

"In your opinion, is this supplication peaceful?" another prosecutor, Laura Ferris, asked. "It's not peaceful," Mohammed answered. "Why do you say that?" Ferris asked. Mohammed replied:

Because every—just about every commentary I checked puts it in a case where someone who is in jihad makes this supplication, someone who is at war with a perceived enemy. The common phrase gives the explanation that it is to be used when in activity against an enemy.

The supplication's context, he said, was for use "when one is engaged in war, a holy war, fighting for God, against an enemy that is perceived to be evil." Guided by Ferris, a white-collar-crime prosecutor who had traded the intricacies of financial fraud for those of Islamic theology, Mohammed sketched the supplication's lineage, tracing it back to two compilations of hadith. He said the supplication could be a *tawiz*—an amulet with a prayer carried as protection against evil. If so, it would be carried by "a person who is engaged in jihad." All the commentaries, he said, indicated the supplication being used in jihad: "With this uniformity of context, there is no other way it could be used." Mohammed testified that he had consulted an array of experts, from Pakistan to Perth, Australia. Some hadn't heard of this prayer; others, he said, corroborated his thesis.

No expert testified for the defense about the meaning of the prayer. Wazhma Mojaddidi, Hayat's lawyer, told me that several experts were asked but declined, even though they

told her they disagreed with Mohammed's interpretation. She felt they were reluctant to oppose the government. A Muslim herself, Mojaddidi tried to challenge Mohammed during cross-examination, but his version persuaded the jury. The jury foreman, Joseph Cote, told me after the trial that he found Mohammed "probably the most learned man I have ever encountered." The defense had done nothing to convince Cote that the supplication could have a more benign interpretation than the one Mohammed presented. "[The prayer is] essentially asking Allah to protect him from his enemies so if he is threatened he is able to kill them," Cote said. "There's no latitude in the interpretation—it's like, 'Put the knife at the throat of my enemies,' or something like that." He called it "quite critical" evidence. "It became quite apparent that this is no accidental piece of paper that you would fold up and put in your wallet like a Saint Christopher medal or anything like that," he told me. "This is something very, very—very specific." Cote was dismissive of an expert for the defense, Anita Weiss, a professor at the University of Oregon who had testified that Pakistanis commonly carry a *tawiz* to ward off evil, much the way Jews place a mezuzah outside their door.

he trusted in Pakistan. Unable to extract the paper from its plastic covering, Abbas wasn't sure what it said—he thought it was a set of numbers surrounded by different names for Allah—but it offered him comfort nonetheless.

I asked other scholars about the prayer. Mohammed had testified that it was not common—"something almost secretive," were his words—so I was surprised when the first three people I sent it to replied immediately that they recognized it, and called it very common. Bernard Haykel, the NYU professor who had testified in the Detroit case, wrote:

The bit you sent me is a very canonical and widely used Sunni (originally Prophetic) Islamic invocation or supplication in the event a Muslim is in fear of something or someone. It is in no way exclusive to terrorists or to Jihadis, though the latter no doubt also use it.

His translation was roughly the same as Mohammed's, but with the caveat that "the Arabic expression 'to be at their throats or chests' means 'to confront them.'"

Ingrid Mattson, a professor of Islamic studies at Hartford Seminary, wrote:

The prosecution's focus on—and narrow interpretation of—a prayer known to and used by millions of Muslims seemed to border on criminalizing a religious practice.

For the prosecution, Mohammed's explication of the prayer was the "icing on the cake," as McGregor Scott, the U.S. attorney, put it. Mohammed's interpretation, he said, fit "very neatly into our theory of the case." He told me:

Quite candidly, when you listen to that translation—"Oh Allah, we place you at their throats"—it's pretty hard to put a benign meaning to that. To try to represent that this is a common thing that people carry about just defies common sense.

The rules of evidence make trials as much about what is excluded as what is admitted. In a filing about her testimony, Weiss said that she had shown the supplication to three Pakistanis in Oregon, who pronounced it "likely common" among travelers. They had laughed when she asked if it would be carried by a jihadist in particular. But for procedural reasons the judge barred her from testifying to that effect. Nor did the jury hear what Hassan Abbas, a Pakistani academic who had served as a prosecution witness, told me when we met. Abbas had testified about Pakistani extremist groups and the literature found in the Hayat household; he was not asked about the supplication. He said to me that he was surprised the prosecution had made such a big deal out of the prayer, because almost everyone in Pakistan carried a *tawiz*. He pulled out his wallet and removed a square of folded white paper that was laminated with plastic—a *tawiz* from a mystic

I recognized the words right away. It is a traditional supplication that you will find in many, many collections of prayers ... This particular supplication you have sent me is reported to have been said by the Prophet when he feared harm from a group of people.

All her prayer books gave the same reason for saying it: "to ask God's protection from people who might do you harm." It was certainly possible that someone with nefarious intentions would have such a prayer in his pocket, Mattson said, "but the prayer itself is a 'defensive' prayer; it does not, in itself, connote a desire to do harm."

I sent the prayer to Salman Masood, a Pakistani who reports for *The New York Times* from Islamabad. He too recognized it right away: "It is a very common prayer," he wrote in an e-mail, "which in a very rough translation asks Allah to save one from the evil of enemies." In a book titled *The Prophet's Prayers*, Masood found this translation: "Oh Allah, we pray that you put fear in the hearts of our enemies and ask for your protection against their mischief." (The Muslim Students Association/University of Southern California hadith database gives still another translation: "O Allah, we make thee our shield against them, and take refuge in Thee from their evils.") Masood also found the prayer in a small booklet that teaches how to say the five daily prayers of Islam; it had a subsection with this supplication. The booklet said that "this prayer should be

said ‘when you have the fear of enemies,’” Masood wrote. “It’s a very common prayer, and yes, I would say that many Pakistanis know about it.”

Did all of this prove that Hayat wasn’t a terrorist or a jihadi? No. But the prayer’s commonness means that it didn’t prove that he was. And the prosecution’s focus on—and narrow interpretation of—a prayer known to and used by millions of Muslims seemed to border on criminalizing a religious practice. What Muslim, after this case, would carry this supplication, even though it is found in common prayer books? No wonder many Muslims (and non-Muslims) I spoke to argued that the upshot of these cases was to redefine for one class of Americans what constitutes permissible speech, association, or belief—to ask Muslims to prove their Americanness by denying their texts, history, and religion.

Walid Phares had argued to me that we ought to pass laws—or at least a congressional resolution—against the ideology of jihadism, much like Britain’s ban on the “glorification of terrorism.” I didn’t take his argument seriously, if only because it was so vague. But I came to believe that the public debate such a law would provoke would be preferable to the ad hoc redefinition of Muslims’ basic freedoms these trials represent. At least then we would have to argue out whether jihadism is any different than Jerry Falwell’s biblically based rhetoric against gays, or the Army of God’s use of the Bible—on publicly accessible Web sites—to justify the use of unspecified “force” in the abortion wars.

In May, *The Washington Post* ran an article by Mohammad Ali Salih, the Washington correspondent for the London-based Arabic daily *Asharq Al-Awsat*. In it, Salih describes his elderly father, a villager in Sudan, reciting a prayer to him over the phone. The prayer goes like this: “May Allah guide you in whatever you do. May Allah protect you from evil. May Allah destroy your enemies.” Salih worries, in the article, that an eavesdropping National Security Agency could misinterpret his father’s words. “His everyday conversation has always been peppered with Islamic words and phrases such as ‘*Allahu akbar*’ [God is great], ‘jihad,’ and ‘infidels,’” Salih wrote. In an interview, Salih told me that his father was the product of a lifetime in the village, while he himself had changed over the course of thirty years in America. When I told him that a prayer similar to his father’s had been used as evidence of Hayat’s terrorist mind-set, Salih grew exasperated. “Then my father would be a terrorist,” he said. “People shouldn’t take prayers so literally.”

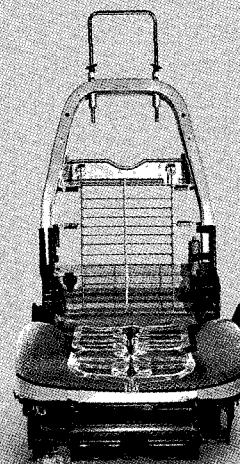
After nine days of deliberations, Hamid Hayat’s jury found him guilty on four counts: one count of providing material support or resources to terrorism, and three counts of lying about it. He faces up to thirty-nine years in prison. The government’s press release trumpeting the conviction highlighted, among other evidence, the “jihadi supplication” from his wallet: “According to a government expert in Islamic law, the supplication was of the type that would be carried by a warrior/jihadi who perceived himself as being engaged in war for God against an enemy.”

After the verdict, one juror recanted, saying in an affidavit, “I never once throughout the deliberation process and the reading of the verdict believed Hamid Hayat to be guilty,” and that she had changed her vote “because the pressure began to take its toll on me.” Hayat’s lawyer, Wazhma Mojaddidi, joined by one of California’s best appellate attorneys, Dennis Riordan, is moving for a new trial on that and other grounds. The recanting juror said that the jury foreman, Joseph Cote, had on a number of occasions “gestured as if he was tying a rope around his neck and then pulling the rope in an upward motion”—something that Cote has denied and no other juror has so far corroborated. She also said that Cote had made “racial slurs,” quoting him as saying, “If you put them in the same costume they all look alike.” Cote says that he was misquoted and misunderstood. Either way, he acknowledges, as the affidavit says, that he apologized because his comment angered some jurors. But another juror, Starr Scaccia, told me:

The Muslims are everywhere. Or, I don’t know if they’re Muslims or exactly who they are—but they all pretty much look alike. They all have beards, they all have the longer hair ... it’s hard to distinguish within that race who is who.

My conversations with a few of the jurors exposed a profound cultural gap. They did not understand why Hayat had lived in Pakistan with his grandfather, a well-known conservative

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cleric, for much of his childhood, or why he had collected political articles in his scrapbook rather than “Girl Scout and 4H-type” clippings, as Scaccia said she herself had done as a youth. But when I went to see Cote in his Folsom home, I did not find the certainty about the case I was expecting.

Cote is a retired salesman with white hair and beard and a forceful and engaging manner. One could imagine more than his age—he turned sixty-five in August—giving his words weight with fellow jurors. Cote visited Saudi Arabia in the 1980s, and still carries vivid memories from that experience. But after 9/11, his curiosity about Islam and concepts like martyrdom became more avid. When he was called for federal jury duty this year, he had just started reading Ross Dunn’s *Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the 14th Century*.

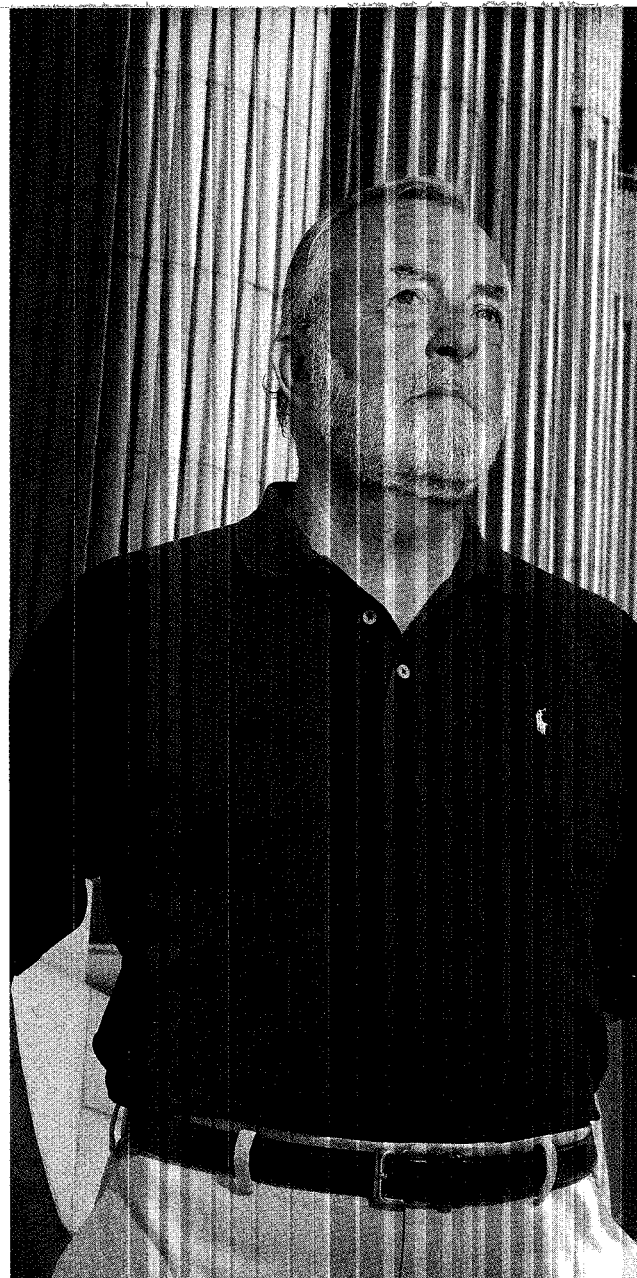
The only evidence of Hayat’s attendance at a training camp was his confession, which Cote never really doubted. Eventually the other jurors came around, or were brought around, to his way of thinking. But that did not mean that he or they were free of doubt about their decision to convict Hayat on four counts. In fact, in our more than two hours of talking, Cote seemed to contradict himself about what exactly the jury had been asked to decide.

Hayat faced one charge of providing material support or resources. The statute under which he was charged did not require prosecutors to identify a specific terrorist organization. As a result, the government could elide the perplexing question of exactly which organization Hayat had trained with, since he had named several in his confession.

But the government *did* have to prove that Hayat had provided material support or resources “knowing or intending that such material support and/or resources were to be used in preparation for, or in carrying out, terrorism that transcends national boundaries”—and that he had covered up his training with similar intent. But what had Hayat been intending to do? There was a vagueness at the heart of the case: by the trial’s end, Hayat’s *beliefs* were clear, but there wasn’t any evidence of a terrorist plan. If the charge had been “attempted terrorism,” Cote said, Hayat would have walked.

Hayat’s intent was the last issue the jurors discussed, when they had wrapped everything else up. To Cote, it was just a subset of the main charges, but he called it “the most perplexing question in the entire indictment”—the least damning, legally speaking, from his perspective, yet perhaps the most weighty morally. After the judge denied their request for a dictionary, the jurors spent an entire morning wrestling with what the word *intending* meant. Starr Scaccia said she was the only juror who was truly convinced that Hayat would have carried out an act of terrorism; her fellow jurors “didn’t feel he had the guts to do it.” The truth, Cote kept saying to me, was that they just didn’t know.

This was their conundrum: Do you send a man to prison—ostensibly for training and lying—when the real question is whether he is a threat, and most of you don’t think he is? “That’s what made the verdict so tough,” Cote said. “Because we thought in the gut, ‘Maybe he may not do it.’” But what Cote called the “literal world,” defined by the boundaries of law and evidence, did not allow for shades of gray.



Joseph Cote

During our interview, Cote said several times that the jurors were not asked to decide whether Hayat was capable of engaging in terrorism. “Believe it or not, that’s the only way I can sleep nights,” he said. And yet they did decide it, Cote said, concluding that the evidence suggesting that Hayat would act—the scrapbook, the prayer, and so on—was stronger than the evidence that he would not. In essence, the prosecution’s strategy had paid off: there were no details of a plan, but Hayat’s purported predisposition—his words, more than his deeds—had become decisive.

McGregor Scott, the U.S. attorney who brought the case, believes the jury did find that Hayat had the intent to act—or at least that he possessed the intent at some point in time. “The crime was complete when he returned to the United States with the intent to commit jihad,” Scott said—even if Hayat later changed his mind.

The “punch line,” Cote said, was that he thought these cases were more than a jury could handle.

We're not being asked, "Did the defendant commit the crime?"—whether it's larceny, murder, whatever. Now you're being asked, "Is the defendant capable of doing a crime?" And I don't think that that is in the ... level of understanding of the juror.

The doubt "works on you," added Cote, who used the phrase "the haunt." What haunted him was having to weigh, with inconclusive evidence, the risk that the man before the jurors was dangerous against the countervailing risk of depriving an innocent man of his liberty. He and his fellow jurors had no extraordinary talents to bring to bear on that task; they were Americans who had been selected for jury duty because of their very ordinariness. As Cote saw it, they were ill-equipped to handle what was being asked of them.

In the end, Cote decided that they couldn't take a chance. There are "so-called new rules of engagement, and I don't want to see the government lose its case," he said. He looked at Hayat and saw what he called a "nice young man." But in his mind was the specter of other nice young men, three of them also of Pakistani origin, who had carried out the London subway bombings. "Can we, on the basis of what we know, put this kid on the street?" Cote asked. "On the basis of what we know of how people of his background have acted in the past? The answer is no."

What was Hayat's background? His religion, his nationality, his political beliefs. Aziz Huq of the Brennan Center says that courts have generally required overt acts to convict because without such evidence, people tend to fall back on immutable characteristics like race or religion, or on political beliefs, which, if not immutable, should be immune to pressure from the justice system. We interned Japanese Americans based on race, yet not one was ever connected to a criminal act against this country. We prosecuted Americans for membership in the Communist Party, even though there was rarely a demonstrable link between party membership and violence against the United States. Hayat's "background," it seemed, fell into the same category.

The other result of this approach is to reduce risk through the de facto restriction of the fundamental liberties of a select group of Americans. Legal scholars have warned against precisely this, because it eliminates the political check inherent in a universally distributed restriction. When you add to this the difficulty of a jury misinterpreting signals of dangers from a religion it does not understand, you get a prescription for possible wrongful imprisonment.

Huq identified a corollary danger: many people who hold certain beliefs, or even take steps preparatory to terrorism (like training), will never act. "There are always multiple possible outcomes," he said. Is it really the best strategy, he asked, to treat as criminals people who are five steps back from a crime? Many people who subscribed to Hayat's way of thinking—anti-American, pro-Taliban, and so on—would never become terrorists. Are we punishing people for an outcome that may never come to pass?

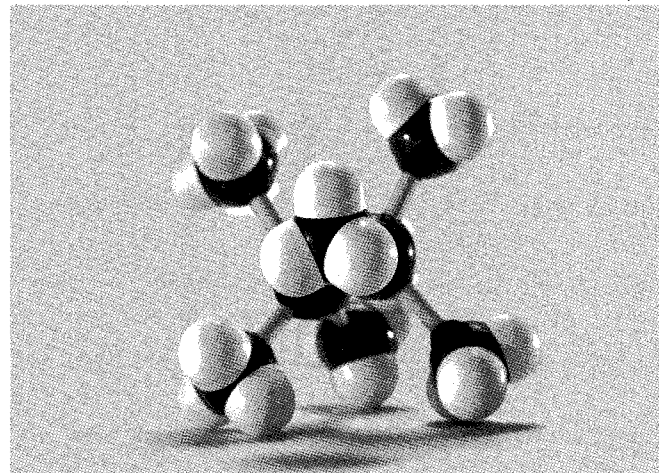
Hayat was convicted as much for what he might do as for what he had done. Closing arguments usually provide

dramatic recountings of a crime. The prosecutor David Deitch suggested crimes that Hayat *could* commit, from spraying a crowd with an AK-47 to wearing a backpack full of explosives into a crowded shopping mall.

In the wake of 9/11, many Americans will accept, if not applaud, this approach. For us, terrorism possesses unrivaled destructive power, both in the scale of damage it inflicts and the fear and vulnerability it creates. After all, if stopping inner-city or gang violence were as important to us as thwarting terrorism, we could start preemptive prosecutions of young men, based on their race, their familiarity with firearms, and their possession of music that glorifies or encourages violence. This preventive approach, Cote said, means that "just as there are people in prison who never committed the crime, this may also happen. Not this particular case, I'm saying, but future cases." He argued that it was "absolutely" better to run the risk of convicting an innocent man than to let a guilty one go. "Too many lives are changed" by terrorism, he said. "So shall one man pay to save fifty? It's not a debatable question."

I left his house and started back to Sacramento, passing the grounds of Folsom State Prison along the way. In the aggregate, at least, Cote's instinct seemed to offer an appealing surety. Only when I was back on the highway did I see its practical flaw: prosecuting and imprisoning one innocent man would do nothing, in fact, to save the fifty at risk. ▀

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Haditha, October 2005

*How did the heroes of Fallujah come to kill civilians in Haditha?
A Vietnam veteran who witnessed the battle of Fallujah says it's
too soon to judge the marines—but not the high command*

The Road to Haditha

BY BING WEST

Photographs by Lucian Read

Toward the end of the savage battle for Fallujah in December of 2004, I met the 3rd Platoon of Kilo Company in the shattered southern remnants of the city. Lieutenant Jesse Grapes was justly proud of his platoon, which was serving as part of Battalion 3/1. A few weeks earlier, a half-dozen jihadists barricaded on the second floor of what came to be known as the House From Hell had poured fire on four wounded marines trapped in downstairs rooms. Instead of backing off, Grapes's men rushed the house, smashing at doors and windows and ripping apart metal grates to rescue their comrades. They swarmed into an alcove, dripping red from cuts, gouges, and bullet wounds. Blood flowed across the concrete floor, slippery as ice. It stuck like gum to their trigger fingers, pulling their aim off target as they ducked grenades that sent shrapnel ricocheting off the walls.

Sergeant Byron Norwood poked his head around a door frame. *Bang!* A round hit him in the head and he fell, mortally wounded. The fight swirled on until Grapes wriggled through a small window and laid down covering fire

while the wounded were pulled out. Corporal Richard Gonzalez, the platoon's "mad bomber," rushed forward with a twenty-pound satchel of C4 explosive—enough to demolish two houses. He placed it on the chest of a dead jihadist and ran outside.

The house exploded in a flash, followed by concrete chunks thudding down. A pink mist mixed with the dust and gunpowder in the air. Grapes was happy to see it. He hastily evacuated eleven wounded marines and the body of Sergeant Norwood, who was from a Texas town but whose sharp wit reminded his colonel of New York City-type humor.

Three months later, President Bush invited Norwood's parents to the State of the Union address. When the president thanked them for their sacrifice, everyone stood and applauded. Back in Camp Pendleton, the courageous platoon basked in the country's adulation. Two marines who had fought in the House From Hell were awarded the Navy Cross, the nation's second-highest medal for courage. Fallujah was the most ferocious urban battle Americans had fought since the Vietnam War.

A Marine infantry officer in Vietnam, F. J. "Bing" West is the author of The Village, a Vietnam classic, and No True Glory: A Frontline Account of the Battle for Fallujah, out in paperback in October.

In the fall of 2005, Battalion 3/1 returned to Iraq with veterans of the House From Hell, together with new squad and platoon leaders. In November, the 3rd Platoon of Kilo Company—including several of Grapes's men—engaged in a fight in Haditha in which twenty-four Iraqi civilians died. President Bush, unaware that this was Norwood's unit, said, "The Marine Corps is full of honorable people who understand the rules of war ... those who violated the law, if they did, will be punished." A year after the president had praised the 3rd Platoon, he censured it.

What happened? What the hell happened? The president, were he a reflective man, might be asking himself this question.

In March 2003, I accompanied the Marine battalion and British engineers who seized the pumping station just north of Basra that facilitated a multibillion-dollar flow of oil. The engineers were appalled to find open cesspools, rusted valves, sputtering turbines, and other vital equipment deteriorating into junk. Heaps of garbage lay outside the walls of nearby houses. Yet inside the courtyards, tiny patches of grass were as well tended as putting greens. That defined Iraq: a generation of tyrannical greed had taught Iraqis to look out for their own, to enrich their families, and to avoid any communal activity that attracted attention.

When Baghdad fell that April, the population was in awe of the Americans. When the American soldiers did nothing to stop the looting, that feeling of awe vanished.

The Iraqi army had melted away, but its soldiers were eager to regroup in order to gain pay and prestige. Indeed, the American commanders working with Iraqi officers reported that they could easily reconstitute several trained battalions. But in May, the American proconsul, L. Paul Bremer III, hastily disbanded the Iraqi army and outlawed former Baathists from government service. The Joint Chiefs of Staff did not object, and American soldiers moved alone into the Sunni cities west and north of Baghdad.

The insurgency began that summer, as gangs of Sunni youths and unemployed soldiers heeded the urgings of imams and former elements of Saddam Hussein's regime to oppose the infidel occupiers, protectors of the Shiite apostates. The Sunni population sympathized with and was intimidated by the insurgents, who freely mingled in the marketplaces. The insurgents' tactics were trial and error; attacks increased as respect for the Americans and their armor dissipated.

The Americans responded to the low-level attacks with vigorous sweeps and raids. This was the wrong approach, because mobile armored offensives could not hope to neutralize the insurgent manpower pool of a million disaffected Sunni youths. The American divisions lacked a commander who would curb their instinct for decisive battle and lay out a counterinsurgency plan. Instead, their inexperienced commander, Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, expressed confidence that the tactic of offensive operations was succeeding.

In March 2004, the Marine Corps assumed responsibility for Anbar province, the heart of the Sunni insurgency.

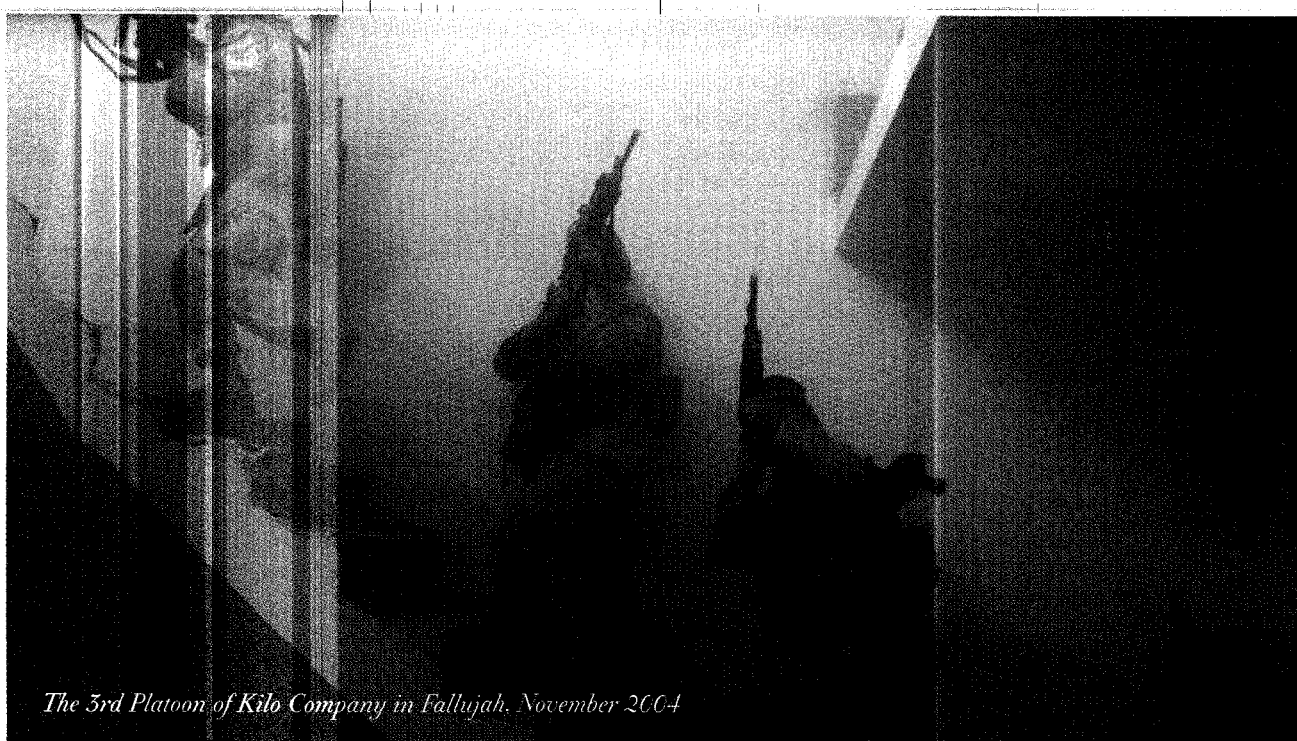
The Marine commander, Lieutenant General James Conway, quickly reported that the security condition was terrible, contradicting Sanchez's optimism. Nine Marine battalions—some 9,000 men in all—were trying to control twelve cities stretching from the outskirts of Baghdad to the Syrian border, 200 miles to the west. When the marines moved into one city, the insurgents shifted to another. Elementary arithmetic showed there were not enough troops for the task. Yet the military chain of command never sent a formal request to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld for additional troops.

The commanders in the field were keenly aware that repeated offensives antagonized the Iraqis. "We must in all things be modest," General John P. Abizaid, who commanded all forces in the Central Command, had said. "We are an antibody in their culture."

Haditha, a drab city of 100,000 on the Euphrates River 140 miles northwest of Baghdad, demanded a constant presence to protect its massive hydroelectric dam. The 3rd Battalion of the 4th Marine Regiment was sent to the city in March 2004. Battalion 3/4 had experienced heavy fights during the 2003 invasion and had hauled down Saddam's statue in Firdos Square, an image seen around the world. The battle-tested battalion flooded Haditha with hundreds of four-man foot patrols. Insurgents who responded with their standard "shoot and scoot" tactics were chased down by squads of marines. Although the mayor had been assassinated the previous summer, the insurgents were not well organized. A platoon was ordered to combine forces with the local police; Lieutenant Matt Danner, the platoon commander, moved his men into the police station. Joint patrols became the norm.

The joint patrol, known as a Combined Action Platoon, or CAP, was a counterinsurgent tactic from Vietnam, where squads of fourteen marines lived for a year or more with local militias of about thirty farmers. In my CAP south of DaNang in 1966 we engaged in firefights every night for the first few months. Then the shooting petered out as the villagers, coming to trust us, betrayed local guerrillas and began to point out strangers. In Haditha, this pattern was repeated. When the first marines arrived, fights broke out every third night; six months later, they were down to twice a month. Danner had hit on an elementary axiom of guerrilla warfare: once the police in the CAP were accepted by the population as the strongest fighting force, information flowed to them. As the Iraqis in the police force became more self-confident, they became more aggressive and more effective.

Then, on March 31, four American contractors were lynched in Fallujah, a city of 300,000 ninety miles southeast of Haditha. Rumsfeld ordered the Marines to attack the city, with the concurrence of Bremer and the military high command. The division commander, Major General James N. Mattis—"Mad Dog" to his admiring grunts—demurred. His strategy, he said, was to repeat the success of Haditha and move in "as soft as fog," supporting and reinvigorating the demoralized local police.



The 3rd Platoon of Kilo Company in Fallujah, November 2004

Washington overrode General Mattis's objections and the Marines went in. Simultaneously, Bremer decided that coalition forces should move against the dangerous Shiite demagogue Muqtada al-Sadr. American troops were thus engaged on two fronts—against Sunnis west of Baghdad, and against Shiites in Baghdad and to the south. Calls for jihad swept across Anbar province, and insurgents besieged Baghdad, reducing it to a few days of fuel and fresh food.

To finish the fight in Fallujah, Mattis called Battalion 3/4 down from Haditha. "Some of the *jundis* in my Combined Action Platoon were up for the fight," Danner recalled, referring to the Iraqis who had joined forces with his platoon. "I told them they had to guard Haditha and that we'd be back for them. They wanted to come with us. We had lived together, fought together." While the Iraqis in Danner's CAP volunteered for Fallujah, other Iraqi soldiers around the country mutinied to avoid going there.

Televised images of the house-to-house fighting in Fallujah stirred anger across Iraq. After three weeks of fighting and confused negotiations, just as Mattis was squeezing the insurgents into a corner, Bremer, concerned about a degenerating political situation, persuaded the White House to pull the Marines out of Fallujah. When the order came through, Danner and his men were bewildered. "Fallujah and the Sunnis out west are a sideshow," a senior Pentagon official told me at the time. "We have to get the Shiites to agree to an interim government in return for early elections."

Within a month, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and other jihadists had taken control of Fallujah. To the south, al-Sadr was cornered, but American officials in Baghdad decided not to arrest him. He slunk away, to emerge later as the leader of the most dangerous Shiite militia in Iraq.

Danner and his men returned to Haditha in early May and resumed living downtown with the police. "Most of the police we lived with were local Sunnis," Danner said. "A few were tough enough to stand on their own, but 80 percent

needed to know we Americans were there with them and would back them up."

In late summer, Danner's battalion rotated home, and Battalion 1/8 moved into the Haditha area. Fresh from the States and eager, the new marines continued the joint policing and patrolled vigorously. Word of how Americans had fought in Fallujah had spread, and the insurgents avoided the new marines, targeting instead the Iraqi soldiers.

"Haditha was sinister," Corporal Timothy Connors, a squad leader in Battalion 1/8, said. "On some blocks, people would wave. But mostly they ignored us, like we weren't even there. You could sense something was going on, but no one dared shoot at us." The hearts and minds of the Sunni residents had not been won over, but the insurgents did not challenge the superior force.

In October 2004, one month before the U.S. election, Battalion 1/8 was called away from Haditha to prepare for a second battle of Fallujah. The White House had made a terrible mistake in not letting the Marines finish in April. At the time, Mattis had cited a quote from Napoleon to his field marshal: "If you're going to take Vienna, then by God, sir, take it!" Delay played to the advantage of the defenders, and Fallujah was now held by 2,000 die-hard jihadists. To take the city, American forces were stripped from other cities across the province. After most residents had left, ten battalions fought block to block in a ferocious urban slugfest. The deeper the marines penetrated into the city, the fewer civilians they encountered and the tougher the fighting became, with jihadists hiding among the 30,000 buildings, waiting to kill the first American to open the door. The 3rd Platoon's bloody room-to-room fight in the House From Hell was typical of the savagery of Fallujah II.

Many of the jihadists, including leaders such as al-Zarqawi, fled Fallujah before the fight and regrouped in the cities the Americans had vacated. In Haditha, two weeks after Battalion 1/8's departure, insurgents captured the police

station and executed twenty-one policemen, including the police chief. With the police knocked out, the insurgents became the de facto government. The deputy police chief gathered his family and fled to Baghdad.

"He was a good man," Danner said. "The November battle in Fallujah pulled the rug out from under the police. We left them on their own. Without moral support, they collapsed."

It wasn't until late 2004 that General George W. Casey Jr., who had taken command of the coalition forces in Iraq that summer, issued a campaign plan that focused on counterinsurgency, emphasizing the need for a genuine partnership with Iraqi forces. He inherited a military mess. Sunni jihadists had gathered strength by appealing to tribal religiosity. They preached that Americans were infidels crusading against Muslims and raising a Shiite army that would oppress the Sunnis. This greatly complicated the counterinsurgency task, because the Sunnis had to be persuaded that the new Iraqi army was secular and not sectarian.

In early 2005, the Marines launched an extended campaign in Anbar province to pry the Euphrates River valley, which runs 200 miles from Syria to Baghdad, loose from the insurgents. The intent was to chop up the "rat line" that allowed foreign fighters to slip in from Syria. Some unkindly compared the effort to the carnival game of Whac-a-Mole: until there were sufficient Iraqi forces to occupy the Sunni cities, the Americans could only jab and punch to keep the insurgents off balance.

In March, the Marines swept through Haditha as part of this operation, searching door to door. The insurgents slipped away. When the Marines left, the insurgents returned, rounded up nineteen remaining Iraqi police, marched them to the soccer stadium, and publicly executed them. A few days earlier, they had assassinated the new police chief and three of his family members.

The Marines responded by again stationing a full battalion in the area, Battalion 3/25, a reserve unit from Ohio. The cycle of hope, followed by abandonment, followed by executions and reprisals had worn down the population. This time the city council refused to meet with the Americans. Instead, a delegation asked that no progovernment messages be played by the local radio station. The surviving Sunni police had fled. The Associated Press quoted the American colonel in charge of the Haditha area as saying, "What I need most now is someone who can say, 'This is a good guy, and this is a bad guy.'"

In August an English newspaper, *The Guardian*, smuggled an Iraqi journalist into Haditha. He slipped out to report that the city was tightly controlled by two terrorist gangs, one answering to al-Zarqawi and the other to a local radical. Executions of suspected spies had become a sport to entertain the crowds. When the Americans drove by on patrol, no one would point out an insurgent.

Battalion 3/25 stayed in Haditha for seven months and suffered some horrific losses. An IED killed fourteen marines in a single blast in August, the worst such explosion to date in the war. Efforts to recruit yet another local police force came to naught. The Americans patrolled the sullen streets alone.

That was the environment Battalion 3/1 inherited in the fall of 2005. A year earlier, Grapes's men had fought their way through Fallujah, often destroying houses in a city largely devoid of civilians. Haditha was their first redeployment since then, after a few months retraining back at Camp Pendleton in the States. Grapes and several of the officers who'd fought by his side in Fallujah had gone back to civilian life; the platoon had new leaders, some of whom had not seen combat.

After Fallujah the veterans of the House From Hell, like other battle-scarred marines, had their own way of looking at houses on a street. "I don't like to say it, but after a while, when you have the rifle, and you see how the Iraqis look at you and how they live," said Corporal Connors, "then some of our guys feel superior—like the people in Haditha or Fallujah aren't quite human like us. You don't think of them the same way. That's not right, but it does happen."

On the morning of November 19, 2005, a thirteen-man squad mounted in four Humvees turned a corner and—boom!—the fourth Humvee in the column disappeared in a red flash and a thick cloud of smoke and dust. A popular lance corporal, Miguel "T.J." Terrazas, was killed—ripped apart—and two other marines were badly burned.

Back at battalion headquarters, streaming video from an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle circling overhead showed a confused situation, with marines at various locations maneuvering amid radio chatter indicating incoming fire. The remaining ten men in Terrazas's squad approached a car that had stopped nearby. When the five men inside started to flee, the marines shot and killed them. The platoon leader later reported that his men took fire from a nearby house. They assaulted first one house, and then a second. When the battle was over, fourteen Iraqi men, four women, and six children had been killed.

The tragedy was followed by eight months of investigations. Iraqis claim that enraged marines executed the civilians. Defense lawyers claim the deaths were accidents that occurred while the men were following the Rules of Engagement for clearing rooms when under fire. The ROE stipulate the circumstances under which a soldier may employ deadly force. In the Fallujah battle, Battalion 3/1 was fighting so fiercely that reporters referred to the ROE as "Enter every room with a boom." But in Haditha, unlike Fallujah, there were civilians in the room.

Time magazine broke the Haditha story in March and presented a balanced report. Then, on May 17, Representative John P. Murtha held a press conference and declared that the troops "killed innocent civilians in cold blood." As the leading advocate for an immediate withdrawal from Iraq, Murtha advanced his own agenda by acting as judge and jury.

After Murtha's incendiary remarks, Haditha captured worldwide attention. Many commentators leaped to conclusions. The European press gloatingly linked Haditha to the massacre at My Lai in Vietnam, but My Lai was on a much larger scale, with implications that the high command looked the other way. If in the coming months the press does transpose the killings at Haditha into a metaphor for the war—as

happened with My Lai—the consequences will be tremendous, and misleading.

A central issue in the Haditha tragedy is whether the marines deliberately shot civilians, or whether they threw grenades into the room first, creating clouds of dust that obscured the presence of civilians. If the latter was the case, a further issue is whether the Rules of Engagement permitted such an action. Forty investigators have worked for months to determine what happened. It remains for the military justice system to sort through the chaos of battle and reach a conclusion about individual guilt or innocence.

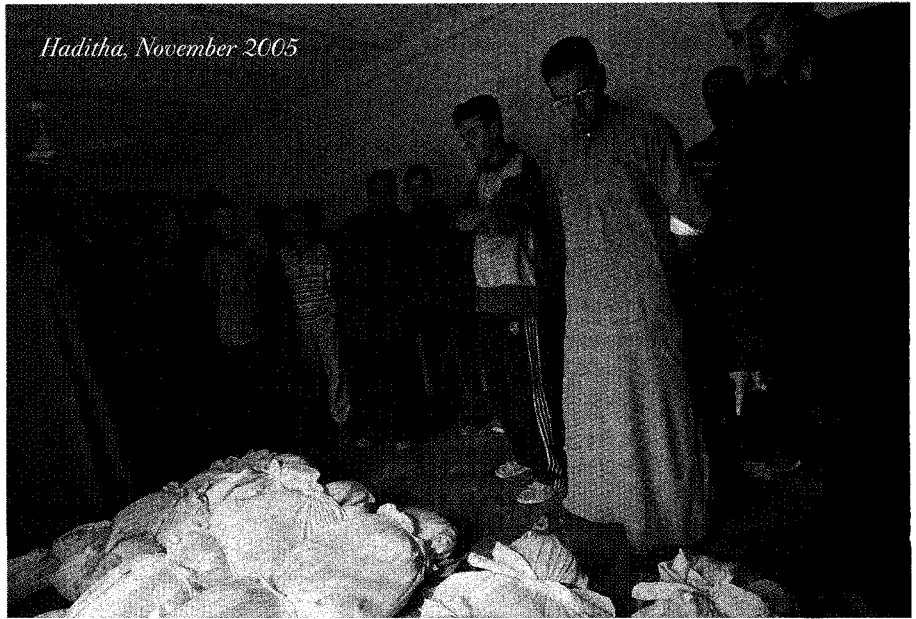
Many more than a handful of young marines will be on trial as the Haditha killings are adjudicated. It is too soon to judge these men, but it is not too soon to judge the high command and the underlying policies governing the conduct of the war. As Americans, we have been fighting the war the wrong way. Haditha degenerated due to a lack of security manpower, both American and Iraqi. We didn't have sufficient troops in Anbar province, and those we did have were shifted to fight a battle provoked by feckless senior leadership. The hardened veterans of Fallujah were sent into Haditha to operate in isolation from the Iraqis, rather than in combined units, as counterinsurgency doctrine demands. We left our squads to fight alone for too long on a treacherous battlefield.

Three years after the president declared victory, our military is struggling to keep a semblance of order, with scant ability to shape decisions in Washington or Baghdad. General Casey is directing a sound campaign to improve the Iraqi army, but the time has come for more radical change. When, in 1969, U.S. Army General Creighton Abrams directed a campaign to invigorate the South Vietnamese army, military skills did not prevail against political turmoil. Given the persistence of Sunni versus Shiite mass murders, military logic calls for martial law and for placing the untrustworthy police under the control of the Iraqi army. But Iraqi politicians prefer to keep the police under local control, shared with Sunni insurgents and Shiite militias, and President Bush has chosen to praise rather than to pressure Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

Regardless of how the war began, we are now locked in a struggle to the death against fanatical murderers. We may yet prevail in Iraq by persistence and the weight of resources. But our military, singularly unimaginative in developing the right tactics to beat an insurgency it refused for over a year to recognize, has some hard thinking to do about how to fight the long war against Islamic extremists.

As the legal proceedings play out, we should have empathy for those young marines who were involved. Empathy should not cloud judgment or excuse wrongdoing. To consciously kill a child or, in a rage, execute unarmed men and women would be a criminal act meriting punishment and dishonor. But the world of an infantryman is unlike any other,

Haditha, November 2005



and a soldier's motivations in battle are hard to judge from the outside looking in.

President Bush initiated the war by authorizing a massive air strike against Dora Farms, outside Baghdad, because one CIA agent said Saddam was there. The civilians who were at Dora were injured and killed; Saddam was not there. In July, Israeli aircraft bombed a housing complex in Lebanon, because Hezbollah rockets were believed to be there. Thirty-seven children died in that bombing.

Civilian casualties are accepted as inevitable in high-tech, standoff warfare. The infantryman does not stand off. He opens the door, enters the house, and, like Sergeant Norwood, is often posthumously praised. The grunt must make instant, difficult choices in the heat of battle. He must keep his honor clean and resist the sin of wrath when fighting an enemy who hides among compliant civilians. Those of higher rank must resist the sin of pride, lest they act impulsively because they are removed from the gore of battle. And we must also be careful not to twist Haditha into a larger symbol that demeans the sacrifice of those very, very few who volunteer to be riflemen.

In his defining new book, *War Made New*, the military historian Max Boot has written that "the most important military unit in the emergence of modern states was the humble infantryman." For two decades, the Pentagon has neglected the infantry, believing that high technology would win wars. Today, American forces have more combat aircraft than infantry squads, and more combat pilots than squad leaders. Fully 75 percent of our Army and Marine infantry leave the military after their four-year tour. They receive no pension, a tiny educational stipend, and no immediately transferable skills.

Of all those who serve our country, the humble foot soldiers sacrifice the most for the rest of us. They don't see it that way, of course. They have each other; they are their own tribe. General Casey told me that he has talked to dozens of grunts about Haditha. "Universally," he said, "they tell me, 'We hope our brothers get a fair shake.'" ▀

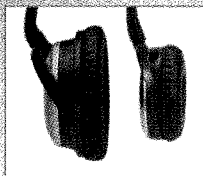
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New QC3 headphones (right).

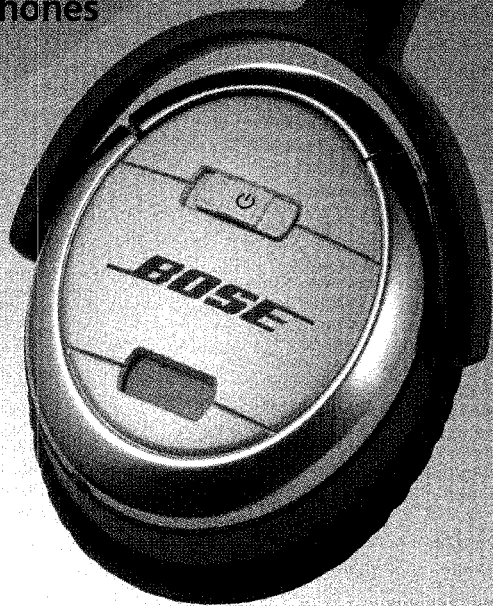
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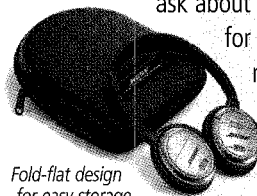


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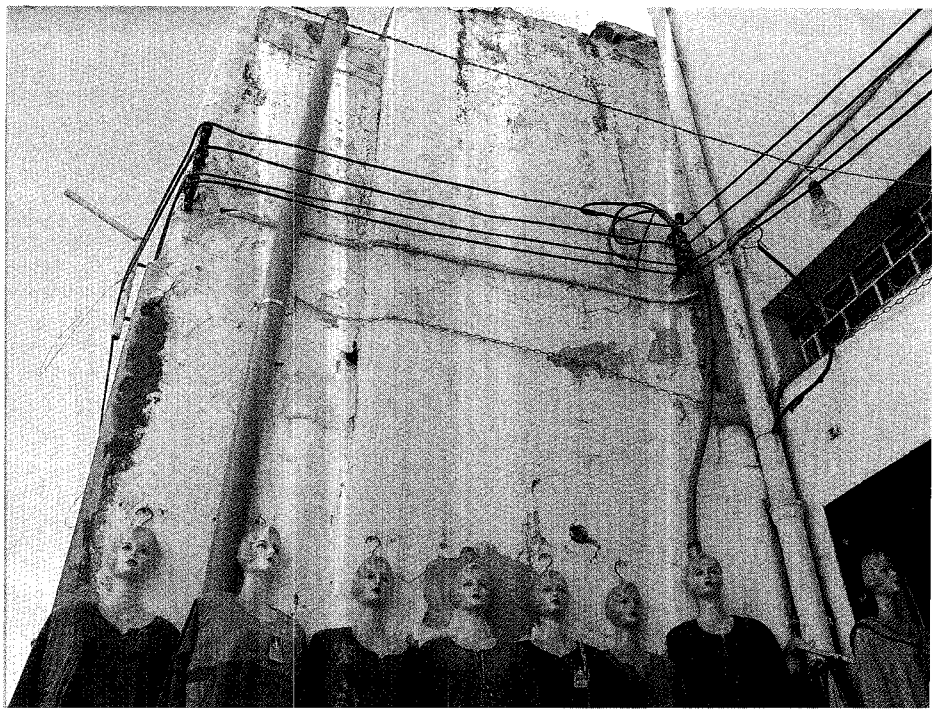
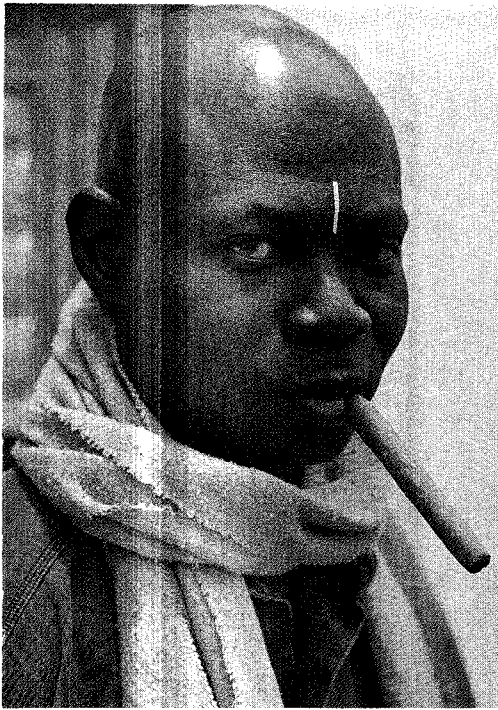


A portrait of Libya

the House Belongs to Its Dweller

PHOTOGRAPHS BY VERONIKA LUKASOVA

(Above) Abdu al Salam and his gazelle take a break from photographing couples for a fee in As-Saha al-Kradrah (Green Square), in the heart of Tripoli.

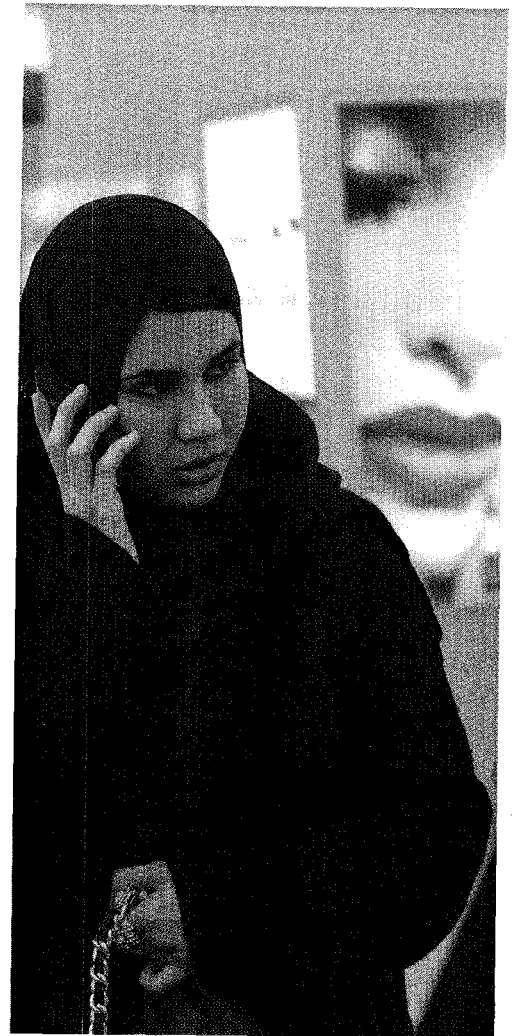


(Top left) An immigrant from Central Africa has a smoke outside his clothing store. (Top right) Dresses for sale hang on dummies in the medina, Tripoli's old walled city. (Middle) A youth wheels goods home from Souk al-Joma, the Friday market, where one can find anything from used plumbing to framed Koran verses. (Bottom) A young man carries the Libyan flag through Green Square.



(Top) Wisdom from Muammar al-Qaddafi's *Green Book*, which lays out his crude political and economic vision, decorates the walls of a building near Green Square. (Right) A new bride poses for photographs during an all-female post-ceremony reception. (Below) Children play in the streets of the medina.





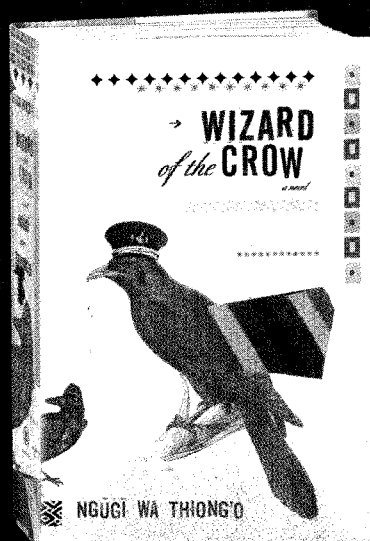
(Top) A Libyan youth group gathers for a ceremony in a public park to commemorate the anniversary of the People's Congress, which was created thirty years ago by Qaddafi and is still controlled by him. (Right) A young Libyan woman chats on the phone while browsing through a perfume store in Gargaresh, an upscale section of Tripoli. (Below) A man walks at sunset on a beach in Tripoli.



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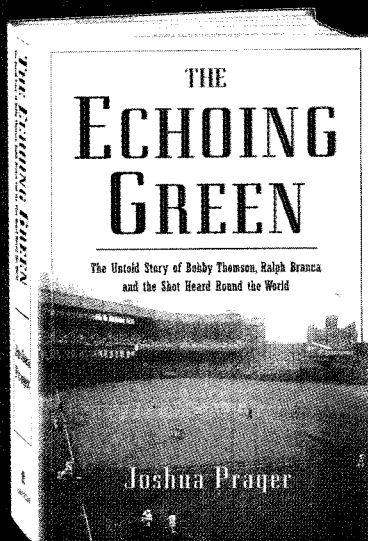
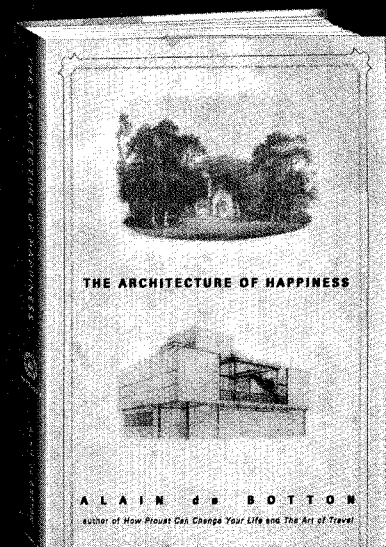
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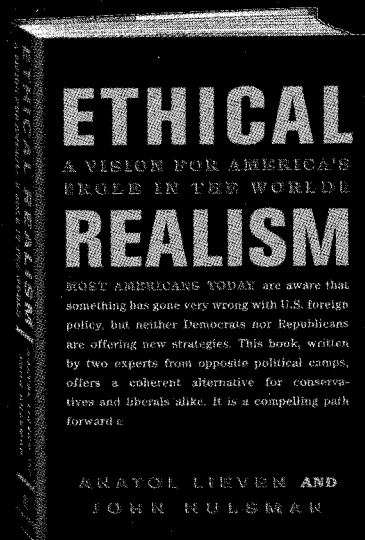
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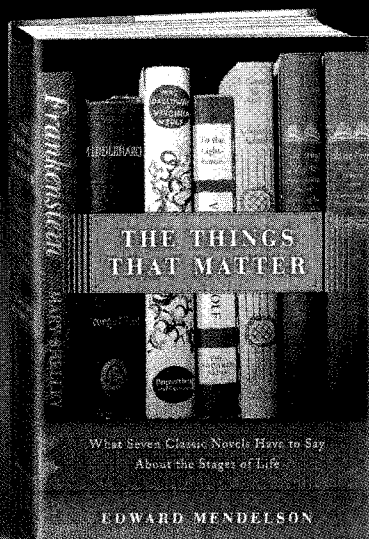


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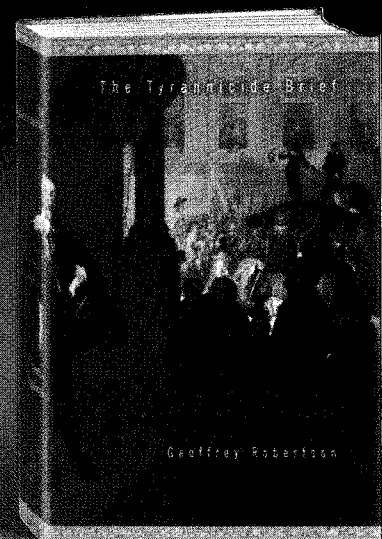
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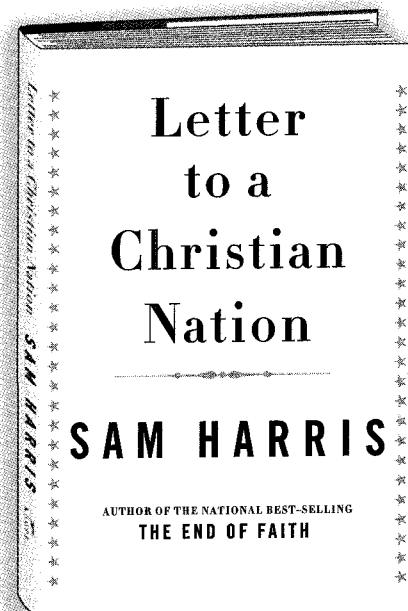
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THE CRITICS

Books, Manners, Mores

OCTOBER 2006 | THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

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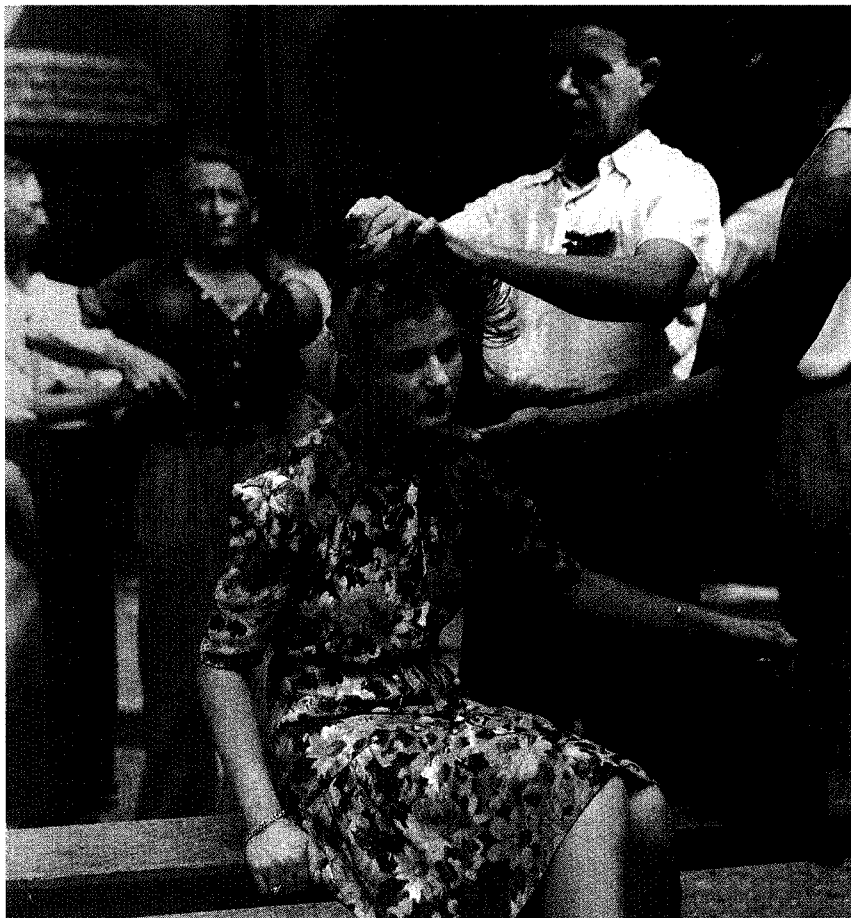
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EDITOR'S CHOICE

The Path of Least Resistance

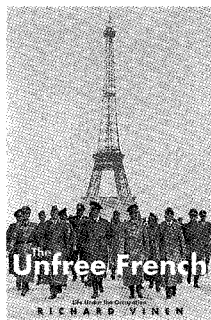
What to read this month

BY BENJAMIN SCHWARZ

At worst murderous and at best tawdry, the history of France under German occupation remains the great stain on that nation, an episode that consistently provokes bitterness, evasion, and recrimination—and occasionally rigorous, even masochistic, self-examination. For the past few decades it's also been intensely probed by historians, who have recently moved from bureaucratic and political matters (the best study of which is

Julian Jackson's *France: The Dark Years*) to the mean and messy subject of everyday life. In so doing they've confounded those who like their history neat. "Resistance," they illuminate, could be a valiant act, but it could also be a cloak for thuggishness, or, late in the war (when the trickle of resistance had become a flood), simply a matter of opportunistically switching to the winning side. "Collaboration," on the other hand, could be

despicable, but more often the shading between realism, cunning, cynicism, and treason was exceedingly subtle (especially so given that the Gallic character certainly prizes the first two attributes, and arguably the third). As the French negotiated their thorny path through the Occupation, they were compelled at every turn to make sordid compromises, perforce an unlovely process. The superb, pathbreaking book *Marianne in Chains*, by the Oxford historian Robert Gildea, published in 2002, remains the most perceptive and nuanced summation of the Occupation, but the author limited his



**THE UNFREE
FRENCH**

by Richard Vinet
Yale

fine-grained social history to three departments in the Loire Valley. Vinet, a University of London scholar, takes a much broader view. Based mainly on his synthesis of both the vast secondary literature and the ever-proliferating memoirs and diaries that have been published since the 1980s, this exceptionally well-written book looks at the lives of ordinary people throughout France during that low, dishonest half decade.

What emerges is that the Allies' high-minded "Four Freedoms," de Gaulle's "certain idea of France," and Vichy's sacred formula, "*Travail, Famille, Patrie*," all failed to occupy the people's hearts or minds; rather, the subjugated French were obsessed with the struggle, at once petty and vital, to obtain food and warmth. By 1943 the Germans were taking half of all nonagricultural production and an even greater proportion of agricultural production: the near-universal memories of the Occupation are of winter's inescapable cold and the endless food lines; *jours sans* ("days without"—when butter, meat, or other provisions couldn't be served or sold) was a catchphrase. So the French scrambled—usually selfishly, sometimes disgracefully, occasionally monstrously, but almost never heroically.

They improvised and cut corners; they cheated the rationing system by

conspiring with doctors to get special allowances of milk that had been set aside for the sick; they played the black market, thereby consorting with and supporting violent gangs; they profiteered; they scavenged from Jewish fellow citizens who were deported eastward. In this and other respects—looting compatriots' homes abandoned before an advancing invader and denouncing old enemies to an occupying force to settle old scores, or, in the case of officials, selling out minorities to protect the wider community—they behaved no better and, alas, no worse than have most others in similarly unpleasant and desperate situations. (Recall an episode obviously beyond Vinet's purview: authorities on the Channel Islands, the only part of the British Isles occupied by Nazi Germany, safeguarded the majority by enacting discriminatory measures against the islands' Jews, going so far as to issue orders for their deportation, which in some cases led the Jews to the death camps. They also directed the Germans to the Jews' homes. That British officials under duress performed with apparent reluctance a task some, but by no means most, French officials under similar duress performed with relish would probably be of scant consolation to the victims.)

The burdens and horrors of the Occupation weren't equally shared, and it's no surprise that the rich, the otherwise well connected, and the wily usually fared best. But Vinet's account is most astute, and heartbreaking, when examining those whose lives were most constrained by circumstances—specifically poorly educated, unattached women, many of whom had little choice but to "volunteer" to work for the Germans. These were the women—not the glamorous figures guilty of "horizontal collaboration," such as Coco Chanel and Arletty—who were most likely to be stripped, have their heads shaved, and then be paraded through the streets at the Liberation as scapegoats by self-righteous and no doubt often self-loathing mobs. Vinet's piercing chronicle not only captures the squalid physical and moral atmosphere of France's dark years; it also unnervingly reveals the moral ambiguity that's the stuff of humanity—and its history.

Bad Faith, by Carmen Callil (Knopf). In Germany and the countries it occupied, the Nazis had a knack for dredging up and empowering a host of weaselly charlatans, most of whom were inveterate anti-Semites and not a few of whom were degenerates, pimps, pornographers, thieves, or bully boys. But for their viciously effective patrons, most of this crew would have languished at the bottom of Europe's demimonde. But vaulted to positions of power (at least over the weak), they helped wreak terrible damage.

Louis Darquier, who served from 1942 to 1944 as the commissioner for Jewish affairs in France's collaborating Vichy government, epitomized these effluvia of Nazi rule. A mountebank (he bestowed upon himself a noble title), an improvident sponger constantly on the run from his creditors, a wife-beating womanizer, and a braggart, the gallivanting, monocled Darquier cut a ridiculous figure even among the rabble of 1930s French far-right anti-Semites.

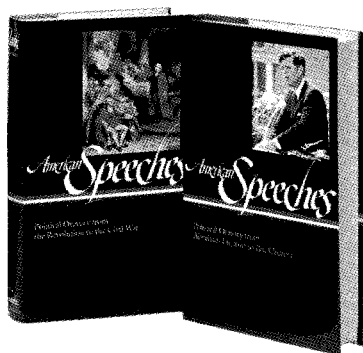
He had, however, some powerful benefactors even then, including the Nazis, who clandestinely helped fund his Jew-baiting propaganda before the war. After their conquest of France, they elevated him, though they found him an irksome blowhard, and eventually succeeded in foisting him onto the Vichy government, even though Marshal Pétain, its ultratraditionalist head of state, despised him. As a functionary Darquier was indolent and ineffective (and one of the very few who managed to put on weight during the war). He hated Jews, but essentially left the tedious work of administering the Final Solution to France's highly competent civil servants—most infamously René Bousquet, Vichy's head of the police, who was later shielded from prosecution by his friend François Mitterrand, the French president. Still, Darquier spearheaded the hateful portrayal of Jews in the media and academe; he also looted Jewish property with abandon and sold certificates of Aryanization to the highest bidder. On his watch France's Jews were forced to wear the Yellow Star, and 12,884 of them—including 4,051 children—were hunted down in the notorious roundup

of July 1942 and sent to internment camps, from which most were ultimately dispatched to their deaths at Auschwitz. After the war he escaped to Spain, where he lived unmolested and unrepentant (he famously told an interviewer that at Auschwitz the Germans had gassed only lice) until his death, in 1980.

Callil, one of Britain's most lauded editors and publishers, came to her subject in a terrible fashion: as a young, unhappy woman, she was treated by a leading Jungian psychiatrist who, in 1970, killed herself while Callil was under her care. That woman, Callil learned a few years later, was Darquier's daughter, whom Darquier and his alcoholic Australian wife had abandoned as an infant in England in 1930 during one of their low-life sprees, and who at adolescence had become acquainted with her father's repugnant past. Callil arrestingly weaves the sad story of Anne Darquier's ultimately failed efforts to reconcile herself to her Larkinesque condition with the history of Darquier's grungy life, the chaos and political passions of the waning years of the Third Republic, and the sleazy intrigue and backbiting of the Vichy regime.

A Mad, Bad, & Dangerous People? by *Boyd Hilton* (Oxford). This, the latest volume in the New Oxford History of England, chronicles what were among the most perilous and certainly the most wrenching sixty-odd years in that nation's existence: the period from the end of the American War of Independence, in 1783, to the repeal of the Corn Laws, in 1846. England's struggle with France, which Hilton avers was "possibly the most dangerous war in its history," lasted a generation, put an astonishing 20 percent of its men of military age in uniform, and spurred a nationwide, authoritarian clampdown on dissent. Industrialization blighted the country's North and Midlands; prompted the majority of its population to shift from the country to putrid, overcrowded, and unregulated towns and cities, with their dark, satanic mills; and caused a demographic calamity: a generation was literally stunted, and life expectancy in industrializing areas dropped to levels unseen since the Black Death. Pummeled by recurring famine

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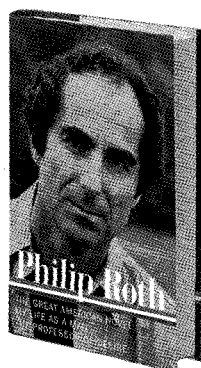
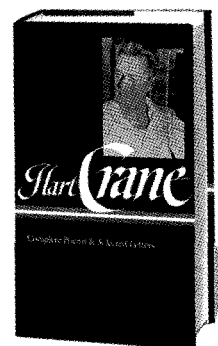
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NEW FICTION

BY JOSEPH O'NEILL



Alice McDermott's sixth novel, *After This*, returns her readers to the familiar terrain of Irish American Long Island and, yet again, to the combination of qualities—compressed, poetic prose allied with an unblinking, William Trevor-ish sympathy for the muffled spiritual adventures of the most middling members of the middle classes—that have earned McDermott her high reputation (and prizes: she has a National Book Award and two Pulitzer nominations to her credit).

This novel is distinguished from its predecessors, however, by its linear, saga-like structure. Episodically, we follow two generations of the Keane family from the parental marriage, in an America still shadowed by World War II, through to the era of Vietnam and haphazard sexual freedom that the four children must negotiate. The inevitable happens: the founding marriage (an economically and emotionally immobile union that can strike the wife as "an awkward pact with a stranger") survives rather than thrives, and the kids flutter into the world on wings that, notwithstanding their parents' best and most loving efforts, are meagerly feathered and can only transport them so high—wings that cannot, of course, fly them beyond the reach of tragedy.

Thus the novel embodies the tension between the climactic expectations we bring to books (and, indeed, to our lives) and truth's anticlimactic tug. Characters brighten into glowing complexity and then, trampled by the "march of time," are all but extinguished in terrifyingly casual flash-forwards that, within the space of a paragraph, effectively write off all the writing that's been devoted to them. This is all a measure of McDermott's difficulty, and melancholic strength, as a writer. Her true subject is her inability, in good conscience, to fully credit the significance of the human travails she describes with such care.

Joseph O'Neill is writing his third novel, *The Brooklyn Dream Game*.



AFTER THIS

by Alice
McDermott
Farrar, Straus
and Giroux

and subject to ferocious economic volatility, Britain faced revolution at home on top of invasion from without, as the most formidable working-class protest movements and the most protracted period of social turmoil in its history engendered among the middle and upper classes what Hilton characterizes as "a constant sensation of fear." Hence the book's title, a half-clever allusion to Lady Caroline Lamb's famously spot-on appraisal of her former lover, the pervy über-cad Lord Byron—"mad, bad, and dangerous to know"—meant to contrast with that of the previous volume in the magisterial series, Paul Langford's brilliant, beautifully written *A Polite and Commercial People*, which focuses on the consolidation and cultural influence of the middle classes in Georgian England.

The writ of the Oxford Histories is to concentrate on high politics, and Hilton, a Cambridge historian, deftly analyzes party maneuverings and realignments, the dominant political personalities, and the parliamentary and ministerial developments that put England on the path to political modernity—including the conduct of the wars with France, imperial policy, Catholic emancipation, the abolition of slavery, the circuitous evolution of parliamentary democracy, the triumph of free trade, and the origins of social-welfare policy aimed at mitigating the deleterious effects of industrialization. But he does so much more. Ultimately, his book is a triumph of intellectual history, yet Hilton begins with a virtuoso evaluation of British commerce, finance, and industrialization, from which he then dissects changes and continuities in social structure, confirming the arguments of those who see in this era the ascendancy not of manufacturers but of what the historians P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins have called "gentlemanly capitalists." In the sweeping chronicle that follows—from the cool deliberations in Whitehall, to the Swing riots in Kent, to the sewage-clogged basement tenements of Liverpool, to Regency London's dandified West End clubland, to Afghanistan's bloody and icy Jagdalak Pass—he draws on the phenomenally vast and unusually contentious scholarship on the late Georgians and early Victorians written these past few

decades (his feline, nearly sixty-page bibliographic essay attests to his energies as a reader and to his unusually sound and frequently tart judgment). He also inventively exploits such sources as scientific treatises, children's books, and even the needlessly intricate, seven-decades-in-the-making Great Trigonometric Survey of India. (Conceived in 1799, it was, Hilton contends, "an enormous waste of taxpayers' money but, like NASA today, that was part of its attraction.")

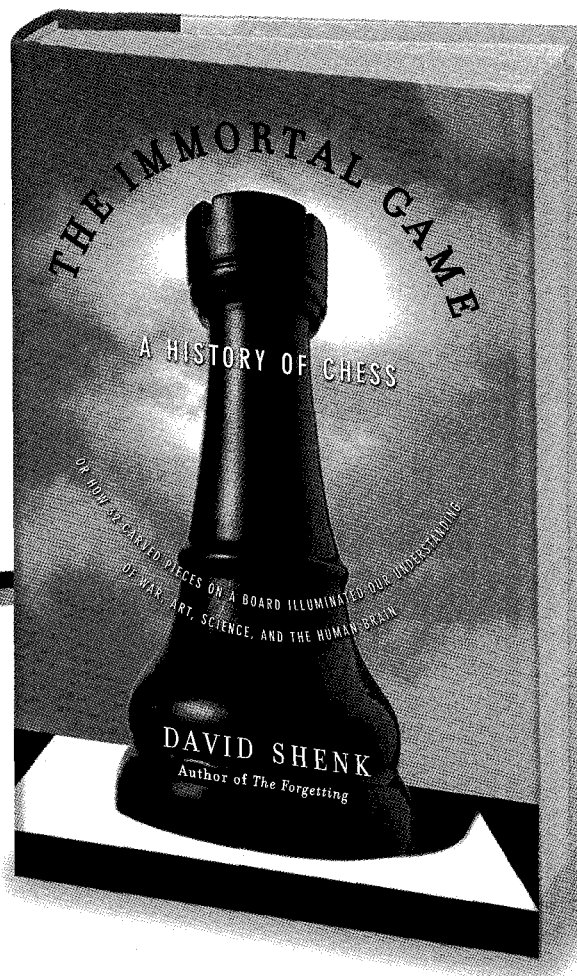
Throughout he writes with cheeky grace ("it is hard to see the *Vindication* as a feminist tract, if only because the author obviously despised her own sex as much as she resented the other"), a rare psychological acuity, and a sharp eye for the telling detail. In explicating the change in the social balance of power from the aristocracy to the haute bourgeoisie, for instance, he points out that it became fashionable for landed sons to take legal qualifications even though they had no intention of practicing law—an example of the old elite adopting the status symbols of the new. Moreover, he's unafraid to cut through a thicket of academic rigmarole: his nonsense analysis of the controversial notion of "separate spheres"—the idea that a central, even defining, aspect of middle-class life was its division into a public, outward-looking sphere of the marketplace and politics, inhabited by men, and a private, inward-looking sphere of home and family, to which women were relegated—brings a healthy dose of economic reality to a debate that's been as gratuitously theoretical as it's been jargon filled.

But what makes this book a model of the historian's art is Hilton's ability to reveal both the complex and subtle relationships among religious, economic, scientific, and political thought, and the impact of those relationships on politics and society. He's well trained in this approach, having written an outstanding book—*The Age of Atonement*—on evangelicalism's influence on social and economic thinking, and here he illuminates the ways in which Britain's evangelical revival affected nearly every aspect of private attitudes (toward child rearing, for instance) and public life (from party politics to the antislavery crusade to the

proliferation of such "improving" organizations as the Friendly Female Society, for the Relief of Poor, Infirm, Aged Widows, and Single Women, of Good Character, Who Have Seen Better Days). But he substantially broadens his scope to elucidate with both precision and creativity the ways political economy informed and was informed by Christian theology, and the political ramifications and affiliations of competing scientific theories, methods, and approaches (John Stuart Mill, for instance, embraced phrenology as "an attack on ruling-class assumptions about free-will individualism," even as the science's "doctrines were used to rationalize emerging industrial society, and to discipline the workforce"). Finally, in what amounts to a trailblazing marriage of intellectual and political history, he explicates the philosophical and scientific bases of political casts of mind and government policy. The book owes its success to Hilton's intellectual sophistication and, perhaps even more crucially, to his consistent refusal to exercise the condescension of posterity, as he evaluates with rigor and discernment the profoundly alien mentalities and sensibilities of what is maybe the first "modern" society.

Finally, alas, this book's publication provokes an indictment of American academic historians: the same publisher's projected eleven-volume series, the Oxford History of the United States, was inaugurated more than *forty* years ago, but so far only five volumes have been published, and not one of the titles will have been written by the historian to whom it was originally assigned. What's worse, not only are the Americans unconscionably tardy; their entries conspicuously lack the intellectual refinement, analytical sharpness, and stylistic verve characteristic of the English series. Compared with Hilton's or Langford's work—or, say, the volumes by Robert Bartlett, Gerald Harriss, Michael Prestwich, or K. Theodore Hoppen—the books in the American series are, with two exceptions (James M. McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom* and, most notably, Robert Middlekauff's *Glorious Cause*), bloated and intellectually flabby. ▀

Benjamin Schwarz is the literary editor and the national editor of The Atlantic.



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BOOKS

The Drama of the Gifted Parent

Hey! Leave those kids alone!

BY SANDRA TSING LOH

The frenzy of academic competition, particularly among affluent American families, has triggered a spate of cautionary new books. The titles reviewed here are all excellent: I give them all A+'s—or, in the parlance of today's elite high schoolers, weighted GPAs of 4.687, including 5's in fifteen AP courses and a combined math/verbal SAT score of 1540.

Of course, I'm a biased reader; in my estimation, there can't be enough books written on the topic. I say, let's hurl them, one by one, at today's frenzied "helicopter parents," who deserve to be, if not bombarded, at least given a simple clonk over the head with a frying pan while a trained therapist yells, "Stop the insanity!"

Winning admission to a coveted college is so do-or-die that today's über-protective parents leave nothing to

chance—which is to say, nothing to the bumbling students themselves. For our most obsessively college-minded parents, it seems foolhardy to allow high-school seniors to track the progress of their own applications, to solicit their own letters of recommendation, even to write their own autobiographical essays about why they want to go to college. At a certain point, one might ask who is actually hoping to pull on that crimson sweatshirt.

In a telling *USA Today* essay on such parents, the MIT admissions head, Marilee Jones, wrote that they even "make excuses for their child's bad grades and threaten to sue high school personnel who reveal any information perceived to be potentially harmful to their child's chances of admission." (Indeed, in *The Overachievers*, Alexandra Robbins points out that the number of teachers

purchasing liability insurance rose by 25 percent between 2000 and 2005.)

And when these litigious parents' work is well done, they need only stand back as their mini-me's shamle forward, robotlike, hurling lawsuits for them. In 2003, with acceptances from Harvard, Stanford, Duke, Princeton, and Cornell already in hand, the New Jersey senior Blair Hornstine sued her school district for \$2.7 million for the pain and humiliation of having to share her valedictorian title with another student. Diagnosed with chronic fatigue, Hornstine had completed much of her coursework at home with private tutors, while being allowed to skip gym class (where even an A+, valued at 4.3, would have lowered her AP-fueled GPA of 4.6894). Her father, Superior Court Judge Louis Hornstine, didn't just support his daughter's campaign; he helped complete her volunteer work, driving groceries to the local food bank on her behalf. (In June 2001, Blair Hornstine also received a Congressional Award Gold Medal, an honor that requires a student to have performed 200 hours of personal development, 200 hours of physical fitness, and 400 hours of

GILBERT FORD

community service. Talk about chronic fatigue!) After winning sole-valedictorian status and settling with the district for \$60,000, Blair, in a bizarre twist, was de-admitted from Harvard upon discovery that she had plagiarized some material in her local newspaper columns. Also in 2003, the Michigan valedictorian hopeful Brian Delekta challenged district regulations that allowed him at most an A for summer legal work, as opposed to the A+ that—yes—his own attorney mother had awarded him. (In the suit, Ms. Delekta served as her son's lawyer. They lost.)

On the one hand, I worry that unless they join some sort of MTV-sponsored witness-protection program, such children have no hope of ever getting laid. (One imagines Brian and his lawyer mom, or Blair and her judge dad, years down the road, sharing a lone Zima at a vast granite kitchen island as the pair of them nostalgically go through old torts.) On the other hand, I have to admit to

a grudging admiration for the sheer professionalism, the smoothly oiled Bonnie-and-Clyde teamwork of these academic parent-child hit squads. I too had insanely pushy parents, but in retrospect they seem like pikers. Yes, my Danzig-born mom wrote all my sister's school papers (which my sister then dutifully copied and presented as her own). However, the result was not Ivy League entry but instead, as my sister will joke, "my strange German syntax, to shake, I have never quite been able." When I was a senior at Caltech, my Shanghai-born scientist dad kept calling my dorm to shout, over the thumping ZZ Top, "Sandra! Apply to any grad school in any engineering major!" Sadly, thanks to the freedom of the EZ student loan the great cheapskate himself had helped me secure, I was already off dating a rock-bagpipe player and spectacularly bombing my physics GRE.

(Out of a possible 99, my percentile was 7—that's right, one digit—a number so low it inspires almost Talmudic awe in those who hear it uttered.)

By contrast, today's top students don't seem to have the sheer Falstaffian airspace in which to belly flop—and even when they do, they enjoy odd new protections. (Robbins cites a teacher's surprise when a star student suddenly came in with a diagnosis of "difficulty with Gestalt thinking"—which, conveniently, allowed her to take all subsequent tests untimed.) However, these soaring levels of academic achievement and care seem to be generating not satisfaction but epic levels of misery ... particularly for the sons and daughters of America's most affluent, education-obsessed families. Such kids are fueling their own exploding at-risk statistics: among all socioeconomic groups, they're now the leaders in adolescent rates of depression, substance abuse, and anxiety disorders. The gnawing discontent shows up less in colorful Jerry Springer-style drama than in a kind of beige blankness, personality absence, or paucity of self. In *The Price of Privilege*, Madeline Levine notes a widespread lack of what she calls an "internal home," described thus:

It clearly is not built of bricks and mortar, but of the psychological building blocks of self-liking, self-acceptance, and self-management. It is the welcoming and restorative psychological structure that children need to construct in order to be at ease internally as well as out in the world ... For me, this internal place looks and feels very much like the big oak tree I used to climb up in my backyard when I was a child.

Which sounds quaint until one considers that in today's overscheduled families, climbing a tree and sitting in it is practically unheard of.

THE OVERACHIEVERS:
The Secret Lives
of Driven Kids

by Alexandra Robbins
Hyperion

**THE PRICE OF
PRIVILEGE:** How
Parental Pressure and
Material Advantage Are
Creating a Generation
of Disconnected and
Unhappy Kids

by Madeline Levine
HarperCollins

HOTHOUSE KIDS:
The Dilemma of
the Gifted Child

by Alissa Quart
Penguin Press

**THE KINDERGARTEN
WARS:** The Battle to
Get Into America's
Best Private Schools

by Alan Eisenstock
Warner Books

NEW FICTION

BY SCOTT PRATER

The battle between the sexes continues unabated in T. C. Boyle's latest novel. Decked out as a thriller—complete with a heroine thirsting for justice, a wily villain scrambling to stay one step ahead, cross-country chases, and close escapes—it is also another T. C. Boyle story of relationships gone awry, of strong women and the slightly awestruck men who orbit them. (The eternal mystery of Woman has always fascinated Boyle; most of his novels exalt females as somehow more-than-human presences who dwell among lesser, mortal males.)

The strong woman in question this time around is a deaf English teacher with a brittle personality, a chip on her shoulder, and a formidable will. Unlike most Boyle heroines, she's not very likable, but she does elicit a certain grudging respect. (Her sidekick/boyfriend, an affable nonentity, serves mainly as a foil.) The real star is her nemesis, a slick crook building a career as an identity thief. By turns conciliatory and vengeful, doting and irresponsible, debonair and crude, he steals her identity and your sympathy; when their paths finally cross, you're rooting for them both.

Compelling characters, a plot built for speed, a canvas that stretches coast to coast—all the ingredients for a gripping tale are here. Yet Boyle is his own worst enemy. The novel is really about *communication*, and how difficult it is. (The heroine is deaf, get it?) This theme—belabored yet undeveloped—smacks of the belief that all literary fiction must first instruct, then maybe entertain. Boyle's fatal addiction to adjectival clauses and piled-on explanatory metaphors slows the story down even more. And under the made-for-TV script and lumbering prose lurks an essentially adolescent vision of male-female relations: women are enigmatic forces of nature that no man can hope to understand, let alone control. Still the bright young Turk, Boyle may have grown older, but he has yet to grow up.



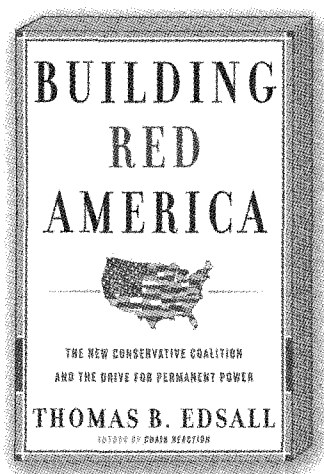
TALK TALK
by T. C. Boyle
Viking

Scott Prater is a writer living in Madison, Wisconsin.

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BASIC BOOKS

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of Covering War

Foreword by Chris Hedges

"A chilling reminder that war journalists are
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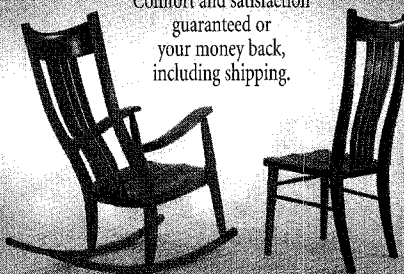
—Chris Hedges, former *New York Times* war
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One fascinating thread Robbins tracks is a growing similarity between the overachieving culture of the United States and the legendarily rabid education culture of East Asia. By the age of six, some Asian students are doing homework until after midnight. By adolescence, they're suffering such high rates of suicide and anxiety that they make the likes of Winona Ryder seem rather cheerful.

But—one might coldly ask, with a certain gestalt bent—don't the miserable survivors at least make better widgets? Even in this, though, the results are mixed. Studies indicate that Asian students achieve some of the highest scores in the world in math and science comparisons. However, owing to excessive focus on memorization, done solely for the purpose of passing tests, these gloomy idiot savants demonstrate surprisingly little practical know-how and often are unable to apply what they've learned. And this is the educational system we mistakenly aspire to, argues Robbins, who traces the U.S. overachiever culture back to President Reagan's 1983 Department of Education report "A Nation at Risk." Its authors identified a "rising tide of mediocrity" in U.S. students' poor scores on standardized tests. In so doing, according to an education expert Robbins quotes, "the members of the National Commission tightly yoked the nation's global competitiveness to how well our 13-year-olds bubbled in test answer sheets."

Of course, until recently in many Asian countries there were frighteningly rigid educational systems, which in turn tracked into few good jobs. Failing a single test as a child in those not-so-bygone days could put you on a path to permanent economic hardship, social failure, and a windowless apartment the size of a telephone booth—making all that anxiety tragically somewhat understandable. By contrast, professional futures in America aren't so instantly or firmly etched—see, for example, the famous college dropouts Steve Jobs and Bill Gates. Getting into college isn't so much of a worry, either: Robbins points out that only about 10 percent of the more than 2,000 four-year undergraduate programs nationwide have selective admissions. And how important, really, are those one in ten? Granted, for graduating

directly into high-paying jobs in consulting and finance, very important. But the most definitive longitudinal study so far indicates that a degree from a prestigious school isn't ultimately worth more, earnings-wise, than a degree from any other school—though the former will certainly set you back more.

Still, a deep river of must-have school mania runs through the chattering classes. There is, of course, the parental adrenaline rush at suburban cocktail parties that comes from announcing one's son or daughter as an Ivy Leaguer. But even at the preschool level, parents now fight to be the last family in, frenetic as the eels in that horse's head in Volker Schlöndorff's *Tin Drum*. Why? Because getting into that \$25,000-a-year preschool is now seen as a toddler's de rigueur first step down the yellow brick road that winds from preschool to private school to Harvard to Goldman Sachs. That said, however perilously narrow such families may seem in their worldview, certainly their academic clarity is enviable. For those of us still feeling our way through the meritocracy, successful career paths are much more complicated. Many of us, unsure of how we got where we are in the first place, are just as unsure of what education will best prepare our children for an unknowable future. (Perhaps your child can indeed get more personal attention at a good state school than at an Ivy League one, where TAs teach all the classes while the professors are away doing research. But when your child interviews for a job, can you trust that her interviewers will be smart enough to see how Personally Attentive that state school really was?)

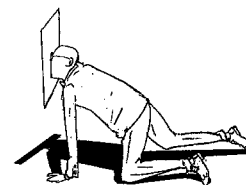
And then there are matters of character. Typically, middle-class educated parents' search for their children's schools takes on the feel, if not of teen girls trying on different outfits, of adolescents trying on various selves. In our own experience negotiating the educational Byzantium of Los Angeles, my husband and I asked ourselves: Are we leafy-tree/Waldorf School people? Are we hip/Johnny Depp-friendly/progressive people? Are we hybrid-SUV enviro-Democrats? Are we white? It turns out that all of these questions were moot, as the answer was simply that we are, if not poor, too poor for

NEW FICTION

A CLOSE READ

What makes good writing good

BY CHRISTINA SCHWARZ



It was clear that his sense of his own worth had ballooned since they had seen him last. His movements were slower and more rounded, and there was a new quality of ripeness in his way of speaking, as if he were listening to himself through headphones. He was trying on the part of the distinguished man.

—from **Breakable You**, by Brian Morton (Harcourt)

Morton, like the character from whose point of view this passage is written, recognizes that meaning is expressed mostly through subtleties—choice of words, tone of voice, posture—rather than grand speeches and gestures. The verb *ballooned* is inspired, suggesting, as it does, puffed-up-ness and hot air; after all, it's not the man's worth that has expanded, but merely his sense of that worth (at least in the eyes of his observer). Morton milks significance from the finest of perceptions: the "slower," "rounded" movements and the

"ripeness" of speech. *Rounded* is also visually linked to *ballooned* and aurally, through alliteration, to *ripeness*, so the general observation of the first sentence and the specific details that follow work gracefully together, beyond the level of meaning. Morton is especially skilled with subtle humor: the image of someone "listening to himself through headphones" nails the ridiculous pomposity of a man who is not distinguished, but is merely "trying on the part."

Christina Schwarz is the author of the novels *Drowning Ruth* and *All Is Vanity*.

our two children to be developmentally nurtured at \$15,000-plus a year. (Which raised an alternate question: In our reaction to all of Los Angeles's excesses, are we half-price closet conservatives of a Lutheran or even Catholic shade?)

Actually, to my surprise, I've turned out to be a big-barreled Mother Jones-like figure—in this case, a defiant urban public-school mother, which in today's middle-class zeitgeist practically feels like being a communist; I'm given to wild-eyed rants against the perils of affluence, particularly when I'm in my cups. Then again, while waiting for the school bus among Mexican day laborers and Armenian grandmothers with strangely dyed magenta hair, I do sometimes gaze longingly at the Los Angeles private-school parents whizzing by in their Priuses—the writers, the composers, the actors, the thinkers ... so intelligent, so creative, so sensitive, so incensed about global warming, so angry about Bush. Then I think of the administrators I met in those private schools, when we were interviewing (as I said, to my *surprise* I'm a Mother Jones-like figure ...). Given that independent-school business (and middle-class urban fear) is booming now, "the front office," as I call it, is always

manned by mercenary professional gatekeepers—the lion-maned admissions directors, the women with important scarves—who let you know, in no uncertain terms, exactly what on your Visa is nonrefundable. But in "the back office," there is always the gentle little gnome who lives in a woodland cave of the mind. In Los Angeles, this woodland gnome is typically a sweet and fragile eighty-something educator (think wonderfully old-fashioned cardigan, white hair perhaps growing out of the ears) who in Austria in the 1950s invented some sort of benevolent alternative-learning theory whence gently flowers the school's educational philosophy. If he or she is the emotional figurehead of an independent school (one possibly even bearing his or her name) that now allows in, by breakneck competition, only the most affluent and privileged (with the occasional Savion Glover—brilliant inner-city child, for color; or perhaps an heir of Denzel Washington), thus exacerbating the twenty-first century's Grand Canyon-like divide between rich and poor, it's not the helpless and unworldly little gnome's fault—it's just something that happened along the way. Hey, you wouldn't blame John Dewey!

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The irony for me is that although I see and decry these social divisions, there's some lingering part of me that wants to sit obediently before the gnome, manipulate blocks, and be patted on the head and called exceptionally creative, and gifted.

And clearly I'm not alone.

Alissa Quart, in *Hothouse Kids*, writes about a visit she paid to Philadelphia's prestigious Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential, and offers this observation:

For many [parents], the school was the center and pinnacle of their own lives. One mother told me that upon arriving at the school, when her son was one year old, her husband cried because he felt they had "wasted a year of our baby's life."

But who exactly is the husband crying for? For his son, or for himself? Is it, as the saying goes, that the child is the father of the man, and that this man maintains an unsophisticated view of human development and human potential—one that is striverishly superficial, and external (to borrow Madeline Levine's concept)? Regardless, woe to the one-year-old who's being pitied for blown deadlines, for having spent the first twelve months of his life drooling and cooing without educational purpose. Imagine how this father's boundless quest to fulfill one's Potential—whatever that vague word means—will unfold as this infant comes of age. Quart offers this extraordinarily telling tableau:

A boy undone by the failure to accept human limits, Icarus is a useful metaphor for the hothouse kid. Building these champions does create a generation of high achievers. But they do not necessarily stay aloft. They may grow up resentful of their parents' inculcations. They may forever romanticize the childhood they never experienced. They may spend their adulthood aspiring to be children. They also share a feeling that normality is banal, even terrifyingly so. They may feel as though they fell from glory. And in fact they have. The attention they once received has never returned.

The terror of the ordinary is what keeps many affluent, educated parents

and their kids out of the merely "decent" schools, the ones that are simply "fine." For Katie, a private-school mother typical of the parents in Alan Eisenstock's *Kindergarten Wars*, the only acceptable school is the one with which she literally falls in love. The campus—with its picture-perfect bucolic landscape, its lush greenery, its air heavy with magical scents of eucalyptus and mint—suggests a modern-day Eden.

There is, ironically, no sense of *school*. Instead Katie feels something else, something ... larger. She feels an immense *calm*. Contentment. And then it hits her. It's as if she has wandered through some kind of enchanted garden and has come home. That's what Hunsford feels like.

Home.

For the next thirteen years.

"I'm in love," Katie says.

After the quickening drama of the admissions process, the expulsion from paradise is hard. Upon being tossed by Hunsford into the death of the soul that is the waiting pool, in a scene that alone merits the price of the book, Katie

polishes off an entire bottle of Grey Goose and curses, for pages and pages and pages:

"The *irony*. I wasn't even going to go through this process. And then I saw Hunsford and I wanted it. I gave up everything for one year, devoted my entire life to getting us into Hunsford. That became my job. Miles had his job. His job is to bring in the money. My job was to get us into Hunsford. And you know what? I failed. I fucking failed. I'm a failure. Today I got fired from my job."

Although one must at the very least credit Katie with greater self-awareness than the weeping Philadelphia father, her admission of monomania and misplaced ego doesn't make the moment any more seemly. And what of Katie's child in all this? Even allowing that a failure to land a kindergarten slot at Hunsford might have existential implications (as pretty much everything, interestingly enough, does), those implications are much less worrisome than the prospect of Mom reaching for the

vodka whenever her parental pride—or inner copresident—is wounded.

So this is what wealth and good fortune have gotten our affluent, education-obsessed families in the aughts. A mother may glimpse a home of calm and contentment (her own missing Oak Tree of the Soul, perhaps?) in the enchanted parklike grounds of a school whose cost is \$25,000 a year for kindergarten, and where—after legacy, siblings, and staff—there are only four available spots for an application pool of 600. A judge father may try to make Icarus fly again, even if that means arduously winching his own daughter up into the air with a mind-bogglingly complicated system of cranes and pulleys that accidentally sends her flying backward. And meanwhile, for adolescents, the result of all this parental academic yearning is grinding pressure, emptiness, and conformity ... such that Ivy League hopefuls—or their parents—polish their autobiographical essays (yet more empty Selves) via www.essayedge.com,



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where for \$299.95 a “Harvard-educated editor” will punch up, in an edited example, one’s inspiring tale of a father’s battle with colon cancer. (With apparently no one being given pause that part-time work for EssayEdge is what the Harvard-educated are doing.)

In the future, when sociologists look back, they may find it fitting that the signature novel of this academically frenzied era is the Harvard undergraduate Kaavya Viswanathan’s famously lucrative and famously plagiarized *How Opal Mehta Got Kissed, Got Wild, and Got a Life*—a book so deeply conventional that the heroine’s Harvard-obsessed parents and a dean of Harvard are actually the feel-good heroes. (You wouldn’t want anyone to be mad!) On the plus side, just as the ’50s gave way—culturally speaking—to the ’60s, this moment in time may be another Oedipal breaking point, from which might spring the beginnings of a real youth revolution. The lack of a draft may have forestalled a college-wide anti-war movement, but young elites surely are being crushed by Ivy-bound pressure, and this era’s needed cultural statement may well be kids joyously burning *U.S. News & World Report* college rankings on the front steps of Reed College. It could just be me—once highly gifted, now fallen from grace, bombed GRE scores in hand, barely able to complete a Sudoku puzzle—but when I read the following passage of Marilee Jones’s *USA Today* essay, I think of Dustin Hoffman in a bus bumping down a dusty road at the end of *The Graduate*:

Last April, a few weeks after sending the acceptance/rejection letters for the Class of 2006, I received a reply from a father of one of our applicants. It was curt and written on his corporate letterhead: “You rejected my son. He’s devastated. See you in court” ... The very next day, I received another letter, but this time from the man’s son. It read: “Thank you for not admitting me to MIT. This is the best day of my life.”

Maybe, with the son’s understanding and encouragement, the father can reapply next year. ▀

Sandra Tsing Loh is a writer and performer whose radio commentaries appear regularly on American Public Media’s Marketplace. She can also be heard on KPCC-FM, in Pasadena, California.

ZOOLOGICALLY CORRECT

A wisecracking playboy gets friendly with bunnies, birds, even dogs

BY BILL MAHER

Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy, by Matthew Scully (2002). A searing look at the way we treat animals, by a former speechwriter for George W. Bush. Think of that anti-big-gummint mantra "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely," and then go with Scully to a factory farm and see what you see: BDSM of the concentration-camp variety. A principled vegetarian and a Roman Catholic, Scully also profiles hunters and experimenters so callous they could land above-the-title roles in a terrorist training video.

Making Kind Choices: Everyday Ways to Enhance Your Life Through Earth- and Animal-Friendly Living, by Ingrid Newkirk (2005). Newkirk, the president of PETA, is perhaps the only author who could discuss both Black Forest cake and fishing lures, tell you what's wrong with arachidyl propionate, instruct on the art of animal-friendly bathrooms, and wind up quoting Spike Milligan: "Money can't buy you friends, but you do get a better class of enemy." Being humane has never been so easy—or so entertaining.

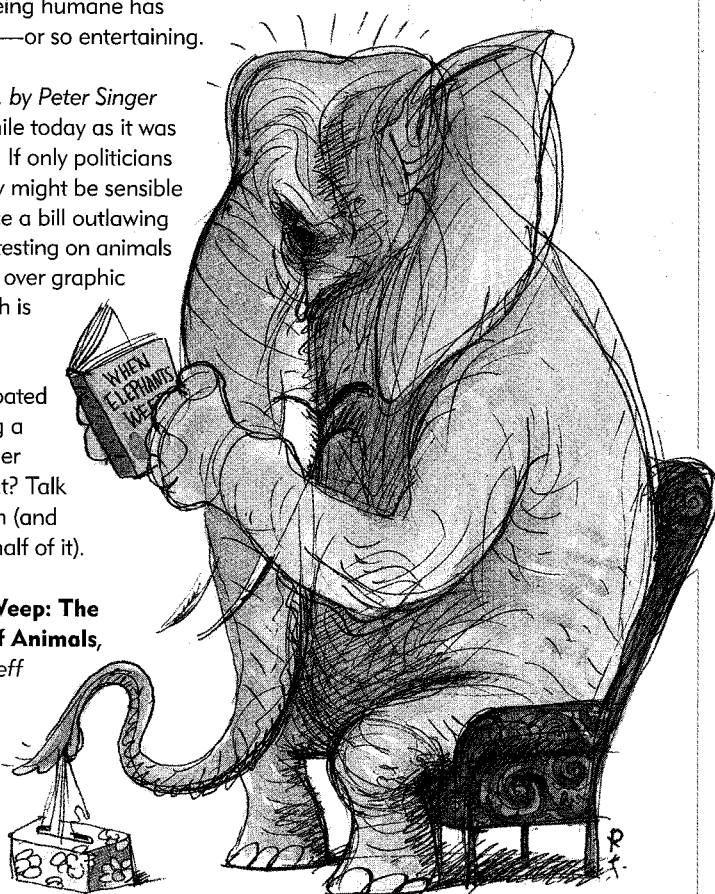
Animal Liberation, by Peter Singer (1975). As worthwhile today as it was three decades ago. If only politicians would read it—they might be sensible enough to introduce a bill outlawing consumer-product testing on animals rather than fussing over graphic video games. Which is more repugnant, a cartoon image of violence or white-coated technicians pouring a quart of floor cleaner down a dog's throat? Talk about chuck-wagon (and chucking isn't the half of it).

When Elephants Weep: The Emotional Lives of Animals, by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson and Susan McCarthy (1995). Hey, animals have feelings! Yeah? Try to convince a real scientist.

The charge of anthropomorphism is so threatening to some white coats that, like unreconstructed Cartesians (or the current administration), they have to ignore all relevant facts to stay on course. Read it and let the rotten foundations of traditional animal science crumble.

Enslaved by Ducks: How One Man Went From Head of the Household to Bottom of the Pecking Order, by Bob Tarte (2003). A wry memoir by a Midwest-based reviewer of world music who naively buys a rabbit and eventually finds himself playing hand servant to a collection of emotionally damaged parrots, geese, turkeys, and other birds. Try living with a parrot—you might wind up on Zoloft, too. Tarte unwittingly makes a convincing, funny case for avoiding pet stores, exotic birds, and unscrupulous therapists.

Bill Maher is the host of HBO's *Real Time With Bill Maher*, the former host of *Politically Incorrect*, and the author of several books, including *When You Ride Alone You Ride With bin Laden*.



NEW FICTION

BY JOSEPH O'NEILL

If, like your reviewer, you are inclined to regard traditional Gothic tropes as silly—who, past boneheaded adolescence, gives a hoot about haunted houses and antics by candlelight? why bother with a *Schauerroman* (literally, "shudder novel") when *The New York Times* is available?—you may be inclined to skip Jennifer Egan's *The Keep*, which involves secret passages, dungeons, precipices, a mysterious damsel in a tower, and an ancient *Schloss* somewhere near the junction of Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic. You would, however, be making a mistake: Egan's third novel, *The Keep* (her second, *Look At Me*, was a well-deserved National Book Award finalist) is a strange, clever, and always compelling meditation on the relationship between the imagination and the captivities (psychological, metaphysical, and even physical) of modern life.

In this case, the Gothic yarn is a novel-within-the-novel. Its author is Ray, a convict of unspecified criminality, and his story concerns two American cousins in their thirties who reunite for the first time since a horrifying incident in their teens (cave, pool, near-drowning) to jointly renovate a castle in Mitteleuropa. As one disorienting incident follows another and the folkloric nightmares of childhood assume, for the cousins, a horribly incarcerating reality, we begin to wonder about Ray's real connection to the events of his suspiciously well-observed tale—and, indeed, about his connection to his creative-writing teacher at the prison, a woman who, in a third layer of narrative, is herself revealed as an inmate of circumstance. Expertly stacking and unstacking and, in the end, ingeniously discarding the Russian dolls of her protagonists' worlds, Egan, in clear and often witty prose, spins a tale of old-fashioned grip that argues for the liberating effects of fantasy and, not unrelatedly, for the enduring significance of the shudder.

Joseph O'Neill is writing his third novel, *The Brooklyn Dream Game*.



THE KEEP
by Jennifer Egan
Knopf

BOOKS

Poison Pen

The exceptional insouciance of Jessica Mitford

BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

It is said that, just before the Sino-Soviet split, Nikita Khrushchev had a tense meeting with Zhou Enlai at which he told the latter that he now understood the problem. "I am the son of coal miners," he said. "You are the descendant of feudal mandarins. We have nothing in common." "Perhaps we do," murmured his Chinese antagonist. "What?" blustered Khrushchev. "We are," responded Zhou, "both traitors to our class."

For a true appreciation of the character and style of Jessica Mitford, it is necessary to picture Lady Bracknell not only abandoning the practice of arranging marriages for money but also aligning herself with the proletariat, while still managing to remain a character in a Wilde play. The carrying cut-glass voice; the raised eyebrow of disdain that could (like that of P. G. Wodehouse's forbidding Roderick Spode) "open an oyster at sixty paces"; the stoicism born of stern ancestral discipline yet, withal, a lethal sense of the "ridic," as Ms. Mitford was fond of putting it. Here she is, writing to her sister the Duchess of Devonshire in 1965, about a suitable present for her niece:

People are always asking me to join committees against the wicked toys they've got here (like model H-bombs, etc) but I can't bear to join because I know I should have rather longed for a model H-bomb if they had been about when we were little. Anyway, the wickedest toy of all, and the one that has been written up and condemned bitterly all over the U.S., is a *real* guillotine (real model of, anyway) and a toy person with toy head that comes off when the knife drops, and a colouring set with red for blood etc. So be expecting it, but don't tell Sophy for fear that the campaign has been successful and they've stopped selling them ...

Little Sophy was then about eight, but neither this consideration nor the



Jessica Mitford in 1979

solidity of the duchess's social position would have inhibited "Decca"—all the sisters stuck for life to their English-country-house girlhood nicknames—from proposing the perfect anti-aristo gift for all seasons.

Her many devotees will, I hope, excuse a précis here: Jessica Mitford was one of a clutch of children born to the uncontrollably eccentric Lord and Lady Redesdale and raised in an isolated mansion where neither formal education nor contact with outsiders was permitted. Only one of the sisters, Deborah, fulfilled parental expectation by marrying a duke. Of the remainder, Unity and Diana betrayed their country, if not their class, by falling in love with Adolf Hitler in the first instance and Sir Oswald Mosley—founder of the

British Blackshirt movement (and the nonfiction model for Roderick Spode)—in the second. Another sister, Nancy, became a celebrated novelist and brittle social observer.

In bold contrast, so to say, Jessica eloped with a Communist nephew of Winston Churchill's named Esmond Romilly, fled to Spain to support the Republican cause, and emigrated to the United States as the Second World War was approaching. The couple had lost one child to illness, had a second one just after Romilly enlisted in

the Canadian air force and returned to Europe to fight, and lost another to miscarriage just before his plane went down over the North Sea. Jessica's next child—by her second husband, Robert Treuhaft, a prominent "Red" labor lawyer in the

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The Letters of
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edited by Peter Y.
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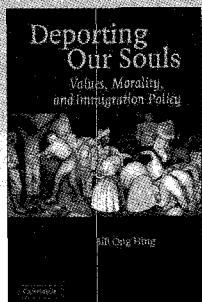
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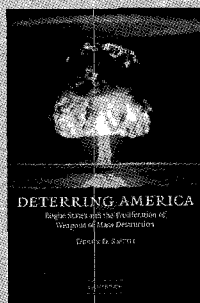


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—Yuen Foong Khong, University of Oxford



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Bay Area—was killed in a traffic accident. Her last-born child developed severe bipolar disorder. These themes—of kinship and class, flight from same, residual loyalties to same, commitment to revolution, and stiff-upper-lippery in the face of calamity—recur throughout this assemblage of Jessica's correspondence.

The best encapsulating anecdote might be this one: When Winston Churchill made his first wartime visit to Washington, D.C., only a few weeks after Pearl Harbor, he was charged by his own daughters to invite his nephew's widow to the White House. He had to tell Jessica that Romilly's plane had not been found. She, in turn, told him that he was grossly in error to have given her sister Diana Mosley, along with Diana's Fascist husband, special treatment in the prison in which they were interned. ("No!" she once told me emphatically when I asked if she had ever been in touch with Diana again. "Apart from darling Nancy's funeral, it's been absolute *nonspeakers* ever since Munich." Her second marriage, to a Communist Jew, was also emphatic, in its own way.)

Waugh-type debutante argot stayed in her speech and prose for life; it isn't difficult to master the combination of overstatement and understatement of which it consists. Anything faintly nice is "bliss"; anything vaguely clever is "brill." Anything below par is "ghastly." Work in progress is "dread" used adjectivally, as in "the dread manuscript." The absolutely worst thing to be is "boring," or "a bore." There are deliberate lapses into "common" speech, such as "me" for "my." This upper-crust style could be used to telling effect. Jessica was confronted once with a racist southern educator who, skeptical of what she told him about desegregation in Oakland schools, said, "It don't seem possible, do it?" Jessica responded icily, "To me it do," and left him shriveled like a salted snail.

She shot to fame—finally impressing her sister Nancy, in whose shadow she had always felt herself to be—with her hilarious-but-serious exposé of the funeral industry, *The American Way of Death*. Almost perfect as a subject for her macabre humor, the book was in fact a by-product of her husband's work for labor unions, whose members' "death

benefit" was being eaten up by unscrupulous morticians. It was followed by equally satirical mini-masterpieces, notably the demolition of the "Famous Writers" racket, in which supposed men of letters like Bennett Cerf put their names to a rip-off writing-school scheme, and by "Checks and Balances at the Sign of the Dove," certainly the finest revenge ever taken by a customer on a pretentious restaurant. In the letters currently under review, one can follow Jessica's talent for vendetta as it evolves, and see her extraordinary tenacity and persistence. Woe to the petty official or scam artist who crossed Ms. Mitford. Writing from an absurd beauty-restoration resort in Arizona whose false promises she was exposing, she tells her husband, "Then lunch, by far the most interesting part of the day so far. We repaired to a patio for it (by the way, paper napkins which I did think squalid)." *Noblesse*, yes. *Oblige*, no.

Because of Jessica's extraordinary manner, many people deceived themselves into thinking that she regarded everything as a huge joke. Not so. Her natural tough-mindedness was schooled and tempered by a fierce devotion to the Communist Party, and in particular to its work for civil rights and civil liberty. She was bouncing through Dixie in an old car long before the Freedom Riders, and when she took up a case it got taken up properly. She even persuaded William Faulkner to sign a petition against the execution of a wrongfully condemned black man.

Pursuing another case of injustice, in Arkansas in the early 1980s, she remembered that a young Hillary Rodham had once been an intern in her husband's law firm, and so she tracked Hillary all the way to Little Rock and the governor's mansion. These particular letters make for interesting reading: in the intervening years Mrs. Clinton had evidently become a bit more of a "realist." Jessica Mitford, in contrast, was one of those who get more radical as they get older. Her lampoon of the ghastliness of party-line jargon—a clever parody of Stephen Potter titled *Life Itselfmanship*—is the forerunner of all mockeries of "politically correct" sloganeering. But when she abandoned the Communist

MITFORDIANA

The literature generated by the Mitford "gals" (or "gels," as they were known in English circles) is of two types. The first is nonfiction memoir written by them. The second is histories or novels written about them.

Very first in the first category is *Hons and Rebels*, the uproarious yet deadly portrait of family life and family politics written by Jessica Mitford and published in 1960. (Since the expression *Hon* was itself a private joke, this book was long published in the United States as *Daughters and Rebels* until, in 2004, *The New York Review of Books* resuscitated the original title with—interest declared—an introduction by your humble servant.) It evokes the atmosphere of the 1930s with more feeling than almost any other book of the period. Later volumes, such as 1977's *Fine Old Conflict* (this title being annexed from Jessica's mishearing of the line about "the final conflict" from the Communist anthem "The Internationale"), provide further hilarity allied with equally mordant seriousness about political questions in the post-World War II and Cold War epoch.

Jessica's older sister Nancy seduced the middle-class readership of England with somewhat more feline recollections in novel form, most notably *Highland Fling*, *Wigs on the Green*, and *The Pursuit of Love*. The second of these contained an acid portrayal of the British Fascist movement, whose leader, Sir Oswald Mosley, had married Diana Mitford in 1936 in Joseph Goebbels's drawing room. (Hitler was guest of honor at

the wedding and gave the happy couple a signed photograph of himself.)

Of the many accounts written by historians who saw the Mitfords as an allegory of British society in the age of appeasement, the best general one is probably *The Sisters: The Saga of the Mitford Family* (2002), by Mary S. Lovell, and the best specific one *Unity Mitford: A Quest* (1976), by David Pryce-Jones. Unity Mitford, nicknamed "Boud," conceived a passion for Hitler; in 1939, believing her feelings insufficiently requited, and herself perhaps unworthy, she shot herself in the head and became a pathetic invalid.

More recently, Jan Dalley was able to draw upon considerable access in order to produce, in 2000, an eponymous biography of Diana, who lived as an unrepentant Nazi in Paris until she died in 2003, and who was (as well as being the dedicatee of Evelyn Waugh's novel *Vile Bodies*) one of the most beautiful—and one of the most unpleasant—women that England has ever produced.

A nice contrast is afforded by Deborah Mitford, the last surviving sister and the current Duchess of Devonshire, whose work on flower gardens in general and the gardens of her husband's ancestral home in particular is a great source of refreshment.

For those who essentially prefer Jessica, though, the treasure-house of her occasional journalism is contained in *Poison Penmanship: The Gentle Art of Muckraking* (1979). This anthology of gleefully pursued feuds and hard-wrung exposés will remain a classic for as long as there is such a genre. —C.H.

Party she made it absolutely clear that it was because it had become too conservative for her taste.

Her seriousness on this point is illustrated by another magnificent example of upper-class insouciance, when she writes to her friend Virginia Durr, a lifelong correspondent and doyenne of the early civil-rights movement:

I'm afraid I was a rather rotten mother to [the children], as I was totally pre-occupied with CP politics when they were growing up; so while I was v.fond of them, I didn't pay too much attention to them when they were little.

The "v.fond" is nicely phrased. No doubt her own loveless childhood had something to do with it.

To her sister the duchess, she off-handedly writes to see if her own wayward son, Benjamin, has by any chance turned up at the former's mansion, adding, "Don't let him into the house if he's too filthy, he can easily sleep in the car." To the lad himself, she writes very sternly some years later, informing him that his bipolar disorder has become a bore and that he'd better buck up and pull himself together; the letter closes with an offer of maternal help "if you

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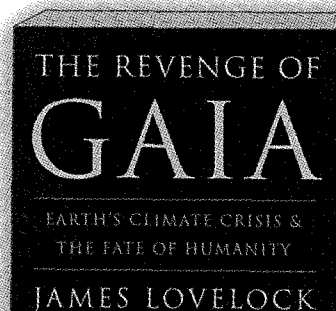


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should ever tire of the manic condition." (It must say something that Benjamin allowed this letter to be published; and indeed, in my memory his mother was fiercely devoted to him, in that, shall I say, understated way that she had.)

Alarming as her tone may appear, it makes for a bracing contrast to the therapeutic self-loving culture by which she was surrounded in northern California and for which—like anything else that was bourgeois—she could find no time.

She was great chums with many great hostesses—most notably Katharine Graham, with whom she formed a war-time friendship that lasted for life—and might have been a considerable one herself if she could have been bothered. One excellent letter advises against the huge mistake she once made of inviting to dinner two grandes dames (Edna O'Brien and Lillian Hellman) on the same evening. Her gift for comradeship illustrates the old Hugh Kingsmill maxim that friends are God's apology for relations. But she was always willing to quarrel on a point of principle, nearly coming to a breach with her beloved Maya Angelou, for example, when the latter stuck up for the Supreme Court nomination of Clarence Thomas.

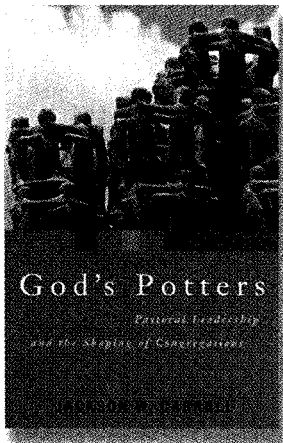
Covering the trial of Dr. Spock in Boston at the height of the antiwar movement in May 1968, she writes to a friend about her shortcomings as a court reporter and adds, "I even missed the riot yesterday, which was so sloppy of me." But on the whole she was on time for the riot, and well turned out for it to boot. The cult of the Mitfords, which now features a shelf of books and several TV documentaries, threatens in itself to become a bore on an almost Bloomsbury scale.

But her mad father, when making dispositions of his property, wrote in his will the words "except Jessica." And the bookstore at the Devonshire stately home in Chatsworth displays works by and about every Mitford sister but her. These paltry aristocratic gestures confirm, as do these letters, that it was Decca, exiled and intransigent, who was the exceptional one. ▀

Christopher Hitchens is a contributing editor of The Atlantic and a columnist for Vanity Fair.

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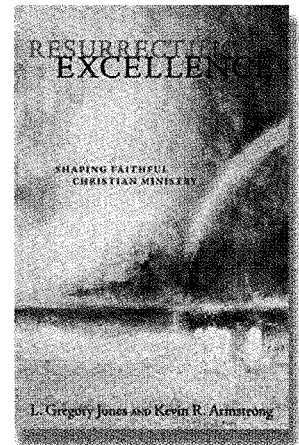
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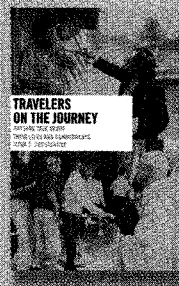


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Righteous

by Lauren Sandler (Viking)

The prevailing belief that "moral values" were the decisive factor in George W. Bush's 2004 victory evidently set many a book proposal in motion, and now, just in time for the midterm congressional elections, we have a crop of books that take the measure of "evangelical America." El-Faizy and Sheler, journalists who were raised as evangelicals but subsequently moved away from the church, visited many of the same locations—the Saddleback megachurch; Colorado Springs, the "evangelical Vatican"; Wheaton College; Christian-rock concerts—and deliver remarkably similar verdicts: evangelicals are a normal and unthreatening component of the American mainstream. Sandler, a self-described "unrepentant Jewish atheist" whose book focuses on evangelical youth culture, is considerably less sanguine about evangelicals' burgeoning clout, but offers the most interesting conclusion: a call for the return of wonder, fellowship, and authenticity to the secular public sphere.

Welcome to the Homeland

by Brian Mann (Steerforth)

Mann, a public-radio reporter, produces one of the best books to date on the putative red-blue divide by focusing on interpersonal micropolitics (much of the book consists of a running dialogue with his more conservative brother) as well as macro trends that often get left out of the debate (the fact, say, that atheists and agnostics are the fastest-growing religious groups in the country) and that complicate the dominant perception of politicized evangelical hordes rising in lockstep.

Does American Democracy Still Work?

by Alan Wolfe (Yale)

Wolfe, a political scientist, answers his title question with a qualified yes, although he notes with alarm that incuriosity,

partisanship, and cynicism—by voter and politician alike—imperil the whole enterprise. Familiar complaints, all, but Wolfe's urgency is compelling and leaves no doubt that he really means it this time.

The Accidental Investment Banker

by Jonathan A. Knee (Oxford)

A refugee from the investment-banking implosion that accompanied the various other bubble bursts of the late '90s, Knee argues that his profession has sold out its legacy of independence and solid judgment, much to its own shame—and to the clear and present danger of those affected by its decisions (which is to say everyone).

HISTORY



Redemption

by Nicholas Lemann (FSG)

The author of *The Promised Land* and *The Big Test* offers this engrossing chronicle of white Southerners' violent (and once-celebrated) rollback of Reconstruction in the 1870s. This book reveals the volatile ways in which history, politics, and pop culture can influence one another and perpetuate falsehood.

Supermob

by Gus Russo (Bloomsbury)

The story of Sidney Korshak, the legendary fixer for the Chicago mob who manipulated Hollywood, Las Vegas, and certain key sectors of the political realm through a combination of sweetheart deals and good old-fashioned muscle. That he remains largely unknown—and that the type of creative bookkeeping and influence peddling in which he specialized is not altogether shocking today—is a backhanded testament to his significance.

The War of the World

by Niall Ferguson (Penguin Press)

This ambitious, if not entirely satisfying, explication of twentieth-century violence by the scintillating (but too-prolific) historian is a companion to Ferguson's British television documentary. Although his ultimate conclusion—that the twentieth century represented not the triumph of the West but rather its decline—is bracing,

it reads as a bit of an afterthought to the somewhat patchwork whole.

Caesar

by Adrian Goldsworthy (Yale)

A monumental biography of the Roman leader that wisely confines itself primarily to contemporaneous sources (much of the information that other biographers have drawn on, while still ancient, was not written until long after Caesar's murder). Goldsworthy, a British classicist and the author of a number of innovative studies of Roman military history, writes with great style.

SOCIETY and CULTURE



The Shape of Things to Come

by Greil Marcus (FSG)

The famed rock critic turns his kitchen-sink approach to the role of secular prophecy in recent American history, expanding the circle beyond John Winthrop, Abraham Lincoln, and Martin Luther King Jr. to include the oracular properties of Philip Roth, David Lynch, Allen Ginsberg, and (to quote a representatively offbeat chapter title) the actor Bill Pullman's face. This last captures what's most exhilarating about Marcus's style: the ability to take an obscure, borderline-absurd object and animate it with genuine meaning.

The Price of Admission

by Daniel Golden (Crown)

An ivory-tower exposé from a *Wall Street Journal* education reporter detailing the extent to which elite-college admissions rules are bent for children of the rich and famous. How alarming Golden's revelations really are depends on whether one considers the subject a vital index of social mobility or a tempest in a gilded teapot.

Social Intelligence

by Daniel Goleman (Bantam)

The author of the best-selling *Emotional Intelligence* (and a former *New York Times* science correspondent), Goleman rounds up the latest research in social neuroscience, arguing that human beings are hardwired for compassion and fellow feeling, and that the pressures of modern life take an unavoidable neurological toll on all of us. Goleman has a knack for making complex science accessible to the lay reader, and he steers well clear of self-help platitudes in coming to his unexpectedly moving conclusions about our innate connectedness.

The United States of Arugula

by David Kamp (Broadway)

Focusing on such eccentric and influential foodies as James Beard, Craig Claiborne, and Julia Child, Kamp, a contributing editor at *Vanity Fair*, traces the rise of gourmet cooking in America. Culturally aware and cleverly written, this anatomy of the French-fried versus sun-dried tension at the heart of American gastronomy is refreshingly non-snooty.

A Well-Paid Slave

by Brad Snyder (Viking)

A biography of Curt Flood, the idiosyncratic, classical-piano-playing center fielder who took his quest for free-agency rights all the way to the Supreme Court, in the process becoming the reluctant Spartacus of North American professional sports.

FICTION

When Madeline Was Young

by Jane Hamilton (Doubleday)

Hamilton, who wrote the best-selling *Book of Ruth* and *Map of the World*, has established herself among the most graceful and thoughtful writers to work the fertile ground that is the midwestern family. In this case, the family she probes with her gentle yet insistent touch includes a first wife who, after suffering brain damage in a bicycle accident, becomes essentially a third child who will never grow up. A lesser writer might be tempted to milk the situation for sensationalism, but Hamilton understands that an accident is usually just an accident, and that real people are both adaptable and complex.

Paint It Black

by Janet Fitch (Little, Brown)

A second lushly written, dramatically plotted novel by the author of *White Oleander*. Once again, the relationship between a powerful older woman and a less-sure younger one drives the story, and Fitch's Los Angeles is so real it breathes.

A Spot of Bother

by Mark Haddon (Doubleday)

The title of this moving English comedy refers to the madness into which a dignified paterfamilias descends, as unobtrusively as possible, while the rest of his family is distracted by their various pursuits of love. Haddon's first novel, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, was acclaimed for its remarkable point of view: that of an autistic boy. Here, too, the story depends upon

Haddon's empathic assumption of his characters' perspectives. And it's awfully funny, besides.

MYSTERY and SUSPENSE



Fear of the Dark

by Walter Mosley (Little, Brown)

Walter Mosley brings us the third book in his Fearless Jones series. Fans of Mosley's Easy Rawlins stories will find in this new series all of the author's usual strengths: a dark glimpse at the pervasive racism of 1950s America, relaxed prose with moments of tight brilliance, and dialogue that makes you feel like you're living the story firsthand.

The Man Who Smiled

Henning Mankell (New Press)

The cantankerous and depressive (but still, somehow, tremendously appealing) Swedish Inspector Kurt Wallander is contacted by an old acquaintance who wants Wallander's help in looking into the suspicious death of his father. When the acquaintance is himself murdered, Wallander comes out of a self-imposed retirement to solve both cases. First published in Sweden in 1994, this is the fourth in Mankell's ten-book Wallander series (which is, much to the frustration of his fans, being released in the United States very slowly—and out of the original order to boot).

The Mission Song

John le Carré (Little, Brown)

From the master of the spy novel comes yet another story about an unlikely hero, this time a multilingual interpreter based in London. The subject of *The Mission Song* is Africa, where le Carré based his best-selling 2000 novel, *The Constant Gardener* (from which came the acclaimed 2005 film of the same name), and the author's affection for that troubled continent is palpable.

Forgetfulness

by Ward Just (Houghton Mifflin)

Just's fourteen previous novels have included finalists for the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. Here he trains his considerable skill on making the political personal with regard to terrorism. How does a painter and onetime-sometime CIA operative respond when his wife is murdered? Written in a style both taut and reflective, this is suspense of the highest order.

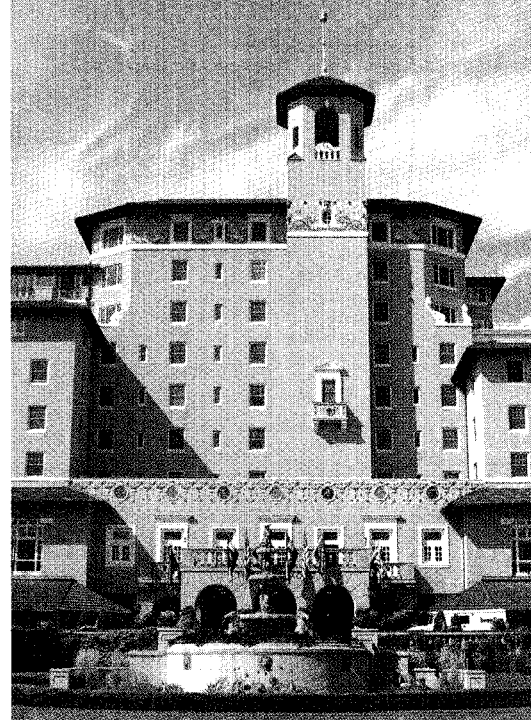
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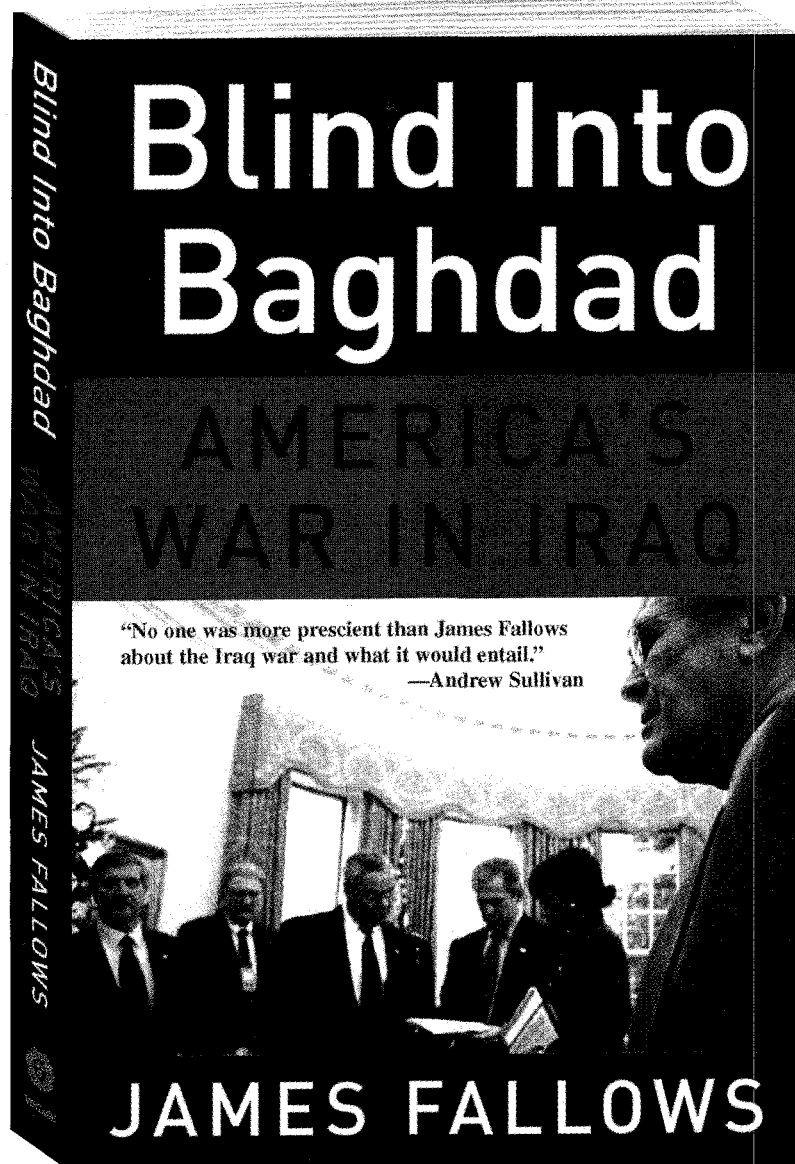
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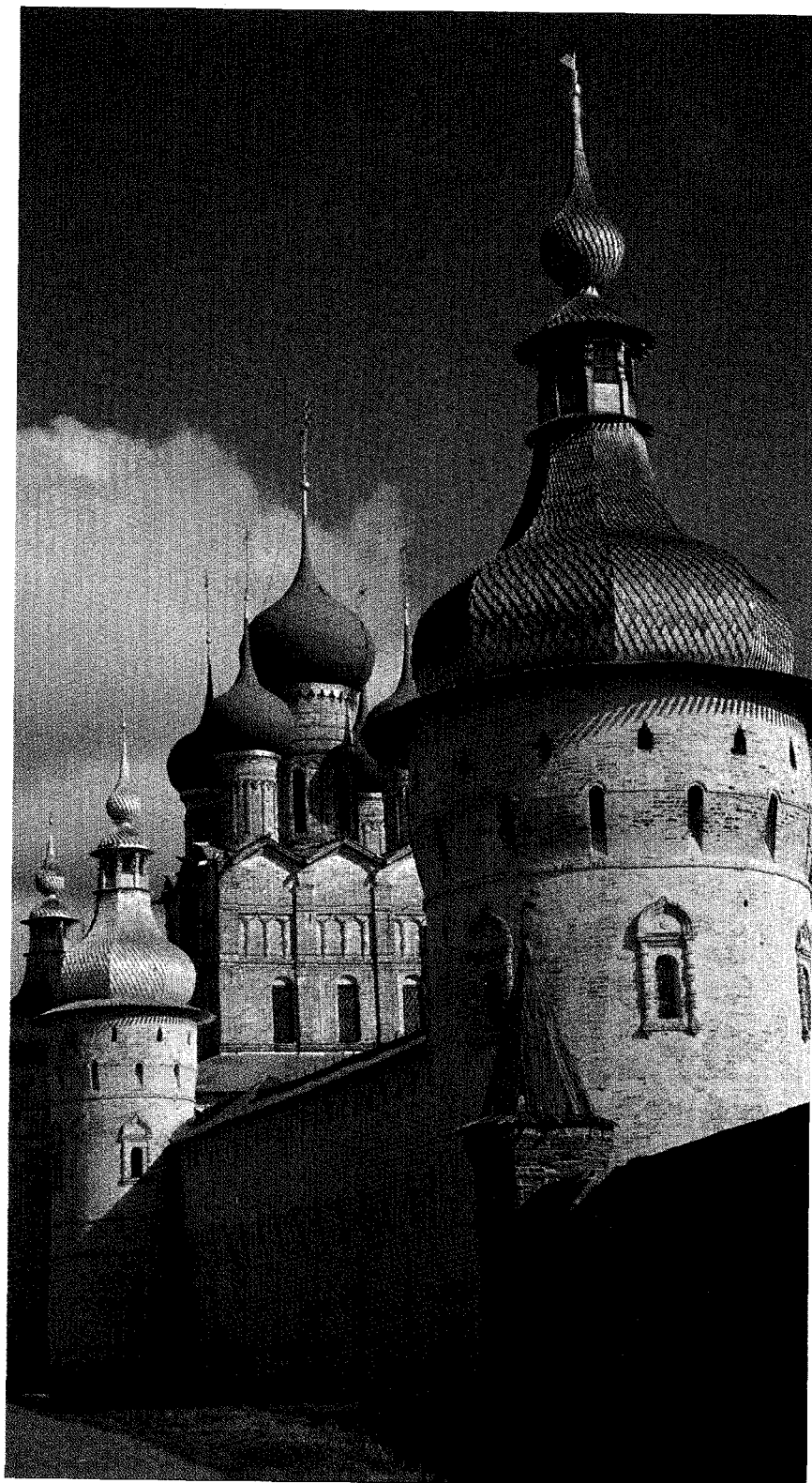
Escape to Old Russia

The Golden Ring, northeast of Moscow, offers a respite from the capital and an immersion in the past

BY JEFFREY TAYLER

In the thirteenth century, hordes of Tatar Mongolian warriors rode out of the Eurasian steppes and laid waste to most of Russia, enslaving or massacring the population and occupying the land in the south. The towns of Rostov, Yaroslavl, Kostroma, and Bogolyubovo, more than 150 miles northeast of Moscow (at the time a remote provincial village), were pillaged by the invaders but spared the occupation. Previously isolated amid forests and on windswept plains, but seated on or near the upper Volga and with access to trade, these towns flourished in loosely allied autonomous principalities for the next 200 years. Forming a rough semicircle, and with a bounty of gilt-cupolaed churches, they and other nearby towns acquired a collective name: the Golden Ring.

The Ring exemplifies what I like best about the Russian countryside: rural hospitality; somnolent landscapes and tree-lined lanes where pedestrians stroll and cars are few; wooden cabins with plumes of smoke trailing from the chimneys; the dreamy susurrus of the wind through the trees. The area is within easy reach of Moscow—several hours by car or train, or a longer but more pleasant ferry ride up the Volga—and provides a welcome escape from the capital's traffic and crowds. But most of all, as I discovered recently, a visit to the Golden Ring surrounds one with the artistic and spiritual treasures of Old



PHOTOGRAPH OF ROSTOV VELIKY BY JEFFREY TAYLER

Russia: the masterpieces of Orthodox ecclesiastical architecture, and the evocation of a hazy, half-mythical era of lost liberties, a time before Moscow arose as Russia's unifier and despot.

As I approached Rostov, a cold wind rolled off Lake Nero, pushing a mosaic of gunmetal clouds. Here and there rays of sunlight shot through, illuminating rows of turquoise and green cabins along the hilly shore, glancing off the domes and crucifixes atop the Cathedral of the Assumption in the town's citadel, or kremlin. Later that day I walked the kremlin's courtyard with my guide, a young woman named Irina who, with her round eyes, plump figure, and flaxen hair coiffed beneath a pink shawl, reminded me of a *matryoshka* doll.

Irina recounted Rostov's history in elegiac tones. The town's first Slavic inhabitants came from Novgorod, in the boggy forests to the north, late in

monks' cells at the fourteenth-century Monastery of St. Jacob, which we visited next, and used the magnificent Cathedral of the Conception as a barn. Today about twenty monks inhabit the monastery. They look after an ever-changing number of *trudniki*, men who drift from monastery to monastery doing manual labor in exchange for food and shelter. I found something reassuring in this: despite the feverish efforts of the Soviets, the communal structures of Old Russia have survived here, at least in a small way.

A ninety-minute taxi ride northeast from Rostov took me across undulant, dun-colored plains and gave me my first view of Yaroslavl: billboards and Brezhnev-era concrete tenements. I wasn't expecting this depressing sort of modernity here. But as we shot past the tenements, onion domes rose up around us. Yaroslavl, like Rostov, is renowned for its ancient churches, which are

the French *charmant*) that, when cranked, emitted a circus tune. Scenes from the works of Tolstoy and Chekhov came inescapably to mind. Indeed, in another room tiny porcelain figures representing heroes from Russian literature stood frozen in crystalline light.

The museum—the first private museum in all of Russia—is the creation of John Mostoslavsky, a magician by trade. With a showman's aplomb, hands astir and eyes ablaze, he described the events leading to its founding, in 1993. “It began thirty years ago,” he said, “when I used an old gramophone in an act. Every item you see here has become a part of my soul.” Born in 1942 in the far-eastern Amur region to Jewish parents who had fled the Nazi invasion, Mostoslavsky spent most of his life performing on the road, all the while assembling a reliquary of Russia's gentrified past—a hobby forbidden by the Communists. “The Soviets considered col-

The kremlin in Rostov stands starkly on the plains, evoking the isolation the town must have felt as much of Russia was settled by the Mongols.

the first millennium, mixing peaceably with local Finno Ugri tribes. As their numbers increased, so did their need for protection. Rostov's centerpiece is the kremlin, a stone structure of solemn grandeur. With six onion-domed churches, it stands starkly on the plains, evoking the isolation the town must have felt as much of the country was settled by the Mongols.

By 1207, Rostov was the capital of an eponymous principality that evolved into one of medieval Russia's main city-states. And as the resting place for the remains of Saint Dmitry Rostovsky, who died there in 1709, it became a center for Orthodox pilgrims, who would come from all over the country to pray at his tomb. This was, Irina assured me, not mere folklore: the church has certified 300 miracles of healing in Rostov.

In their campaign against religion, the Soviets leveled most of Rostov's churches and deliberately neglected the town. The government housed proletarians in the

everywhere in the city. Pedestrian streets teeming with shoppers dead-ended at cathedral walls; markets where old women haggled over cheese and sausage abutted antique brick churches; young people strolled in and out of cafés and pizza parlors in the shadows of belfries. With a population of 680,000, Yaroslavl bustled in a way that tiny Rostov, with only 40,000 inhabitants, could not, yet it exuded the same sort of charm.

And the city has its peaceful places. At the Museum of Music and Time, located in a fin-de-siècle merchant's house on the Volga, I drifted into reverie listening to the ticking of countless Swiss, German, and French clocks from centuries past, along with an intermittent, soothing concert of chimes that sounded regardless of the hour. (The clocks were not synchronized.) I heard a Cupid-emblazoned German Klingsor gramophone playing Chaliapin and Caruso; Swiss music boxes that tinkled out ditties; and an Odessan street organ called a *sharmanka* (from

lecting antiquities tantamount to dealing in hard currency,” he told me, smiling. “But I've never been law abiding. I've always done what I want. And in Soviet days I did my time in jail.”

As he spoke Mostoslavsky walked about the museum, cranking the gramophones and playing the organs, ringing the bells and pumping the pneumatic pedals on a Story & Clark player piano. “For me, musical instruments are meant to be *played*,” he said. “This is a living museum, a *cri de coeur*!”

His enthusiasm has evidently infected others. Before leaving I thumbed through an album full of photographs showing newlyweds posing in front of Mostoslavsky's pianos—something of a postnuptial ritual in the town.

In 1888 a young artist with delicate features and intense eyes debarked from a Volga ferry in Plyos, a tiny hamlet about sixty miles east of Yaroslavl. The surrounding meadows, the birch-mantled

The Atlantic emporium

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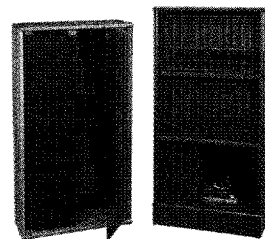
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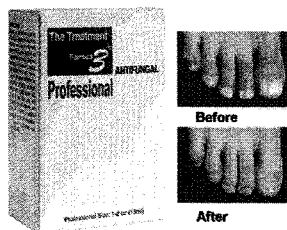
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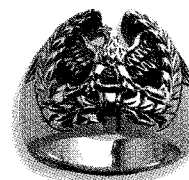
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THE TRAVEL ADVISORY

The Golden Ring is just a three- to five-hour drive from Moscow. Renting a car, though expensive (about \$100 a day), will maximize your flexibility once there. The roads north of Moscow can be challenging: keep an eye out for aggressive truckers, axle-breaking potholes, and—even on the highways—the occasional horse-drawn cart. Trains to the Ring depart frequently from Yaroslavl Station, in central Moscow. Volga ferries, however, provide a more unusual experience. (Ferry tickets must be booked through tour agencies.) Once in the Ring towns, you can order taxis through your hotel concierge for reasonable rates fixed in advance.

Consider hiring a local guide—they can be very knowledgeable—to take you to the churches and cathedrals; ask for recommendations at your hotel's reception desk. Alternatively, Lonely Planet's *Russia & Belarus* provides enough information for independent visits. In all houses of worship, both sexes should dress conservatively: men should not wear shorts, and women should bring a scarf to cover their hair.

The kremlin-side location of the **Hotel Boyarsky Dvor** ("The Boyars' Court") makes it the top choice for accommodations in Rostov. It also has a traditional Russian restaurant that is regarded as the best in town.

Hotel Boyarsky Dvor
4 Kamennyi Most Street
011-74-85-366-0446
Moscow office: 011-74-95-975-1681

In Yaroslavl, try the **Hotel Yubileynaya**. This large Soviet-era hotel has undergone enough renovation to make for a pleasant, though not luxurious, stay, and its perch above the Kotorosl River affords excellent views. You can dine there or at the **Restaurant Chateau** for international cuisine; for Russian fare, try the historically holy environs of the **Restaurant Spasskiye Palaty**, right in the Spaso-Preobrazhensky Monastery.

Hotel Yubileynaya
26 Kotorosl'naya Embankment
011-74-85-230-7363
fax: 011-74-85-230-9259

Restaurant Chateau
20a Trefolyeva Street

Restaurant Spasskiye Palaty
25 Bogoyavlenskaya Square

While in town, allow a couple of hours to visit the **Museum of Music and Time**.

Museum of Music and Time
33a Volzhskaya Embankment
011-74-85-232-8637

The **Hotel Volga**, in Kostroma, is another Soviet-style cement behemoth—but it occupies the finest real estate in the city, and has splendid views of the river. Staff members may display shocking indifference until they spot your foreign passport. Book either a "deluxe" or a "semi-deluxe" room on the fourth or tenth floor, which have been renovated to international standards.

Hotel Volga
1 Yunosheskaya Street
011-74-94-254-6163 or 6262

For a departure from Russian cuisine, try one of the many Central Asian lamb and noodle dishes at the Uzbek Russian restaurant **Beloye Solntse** ("White Sun"), a ten-minute taxi ride east along the Volga from the hotel.

Beloye Solntse
2 Lesnaya Street

To see the works of the greatest Russian realist in the location in which they were painted, visit the **Levitan House Museum**, in Plyos, an hour's car or taxi ride from Kostroma.

Levitan House Museum
4 Lunacharskogo Street
011-74-93-394-3478

Accommodations in Bogolyubovo are limited; consider staying instead in Suzdal, a half hour north and a beautiful historic town in its own right. A good choice is the **Hotel Pushkarskaya Sloboda**, which has well-appointed rooms in the main building and separate pine bungalows, and is a favorite weekend haunt of the Muscovite elite.

Hotel Pushkarskaya Sloboda
43 Lenin Street
011-74-92-312-3363

Head out to the **Trapeznaya Restaurant**, inside the Suzdal kremlin, for Russian cuisine in a majestic setting.

Trapeznaya Restaurant
20 Kremlevskaya Street

hills, and the fir-shaded dales inspired him to spend three summers there, during which he painted more than forty landscapes. The artist's name was Isaac Levitan; his Plyos pictures would earn him fame as the greatest Russian realist.

Levitan lived modestly in Plyos, renting, with his mistress and an artist friend, the upper floor of a merchant's riverside house, which is now a museum exhibiting some of his work. (Much more is on display in the State Tretyakov Gallery, in Moscow.) As soon as I arrived in the town, I searched out his home. Upstairs was a sitting room bathed in the Volga's blue reflected light; in it, an easel stood next to an oak desk and a lamp with a filigreed base. Across the hall was a dining room looking out onto a stand of birches.

Downstairs I examined Levitan's paintings. In one room hung originals, including *Sunset on the Volga*, depicting the peach-tinted sky of an endless summer's eve; *Quiet River*, a tableau saturated with the verdure that blooms so vividly yet ephemerally in Russia; and *Spring Has Arrived*, a slushy scene of a log-cabin village huddled under a cold sky early in the season of revival. Another room held reproductions; my favorite was *Evening Bells*, which shows a green-domed church reigning over a glassy river that winds away into fiery autumnal forests.

Later I wandered down the embankment. The ferry station, a floating wooden structure painted blue and white, creaked on currents glinting with the copper lambency of the expiring day. Levitan died of a heart ailment just shy of his fortieth birthday, but the beauty and tranquillity his works evince pervade Plyos still.

Prince Vladimir of Kiev accepted Christianity from the Byzantine Greeks in A.D. 988. Since then, religion has flowed through the Russian state, becoming intertwined with patriotic sentiment and official ideology. It was from the Monastery of St. Ipaty in Kostroma, forty miles east of Yaroslavl, that the first Romanov czar emerged from hiding, in 1613, to end the Time of Troubles—a fifteen-year interregnum of civil war, invasion, and famine following a disputed succession to the throne—

and inaugurate the dynasty that would rule until the Bolshevik Revolution.

In the monastery's Trinity Cathedral, a researcher named Larisa showed me the iconostasis, multitiered and inlaid with impossibly ornate icons, and the frescoes—more than eighty in all—adorning the high walls. Several of the scenes dealt with Judgment Day: Jesus conferring with Mary and the apostles, devils dragging sinners off to hell, angels weighing repentance against sin on handheld scales. One showed a monk ascending a ladder, each rung representing a sin. "We can't overcome all our sins at once," Larisa said. "We must move slowly, conquering one after the other."

I told her what I had always assumed: that such frescoes served as a Bible for the illiterate, teaching Christianity in pictures—especially necessary because Orthodox services are conducted in Old Church Slavonic, which today can be difficult to understand. Larisa disagreed. "That's a misconception related to how we think now," she said. "The public, even the illiterate, *would* have understood the texts—if not at first, then over time and with repeated exposure. The Old Church Slavonic masks many layers of meaning and reveals them to us gradually."

Obscurity as a means of enlightenment? I wasn't sure I bought this. So in Bogolyubovo, 120 miles south of Kostroma and my last stop before returning to Moscow, I attended a liturgy one evening in a nineteenth-century cathedral, a soaring structure of whitewashed stone.

There are no pews in Russian Orthodox churches; worshippers must stand. By the second hour of the service I was tired (and dizzy from the incense), but I began to suspect that Larisa was right: the sense of the text *was* seeping in with repetition. And the rituals seemed almost palpably to be uniting the worshippers, allowing them, perhaps, to forget for a time the trials of the present. The mystery of gloom in the Golden Ring's cathedrals, the enigma of its icons and ancient texts, might, I reflected, be the greatest and most enduring legacy of Old Russia. ■

Jeffrey Tayler lives in Moscow and is a correspondent for The Atlantic. His most recent book is River of No Reprieve: Descending Siberia's Waterway of Exile, Death, and Destiny.

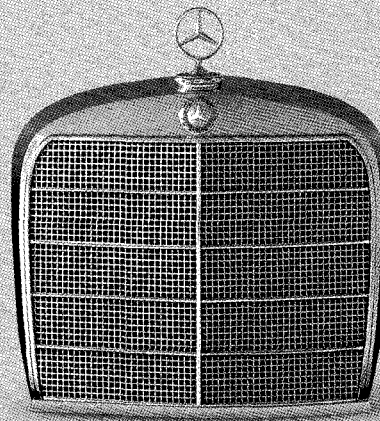


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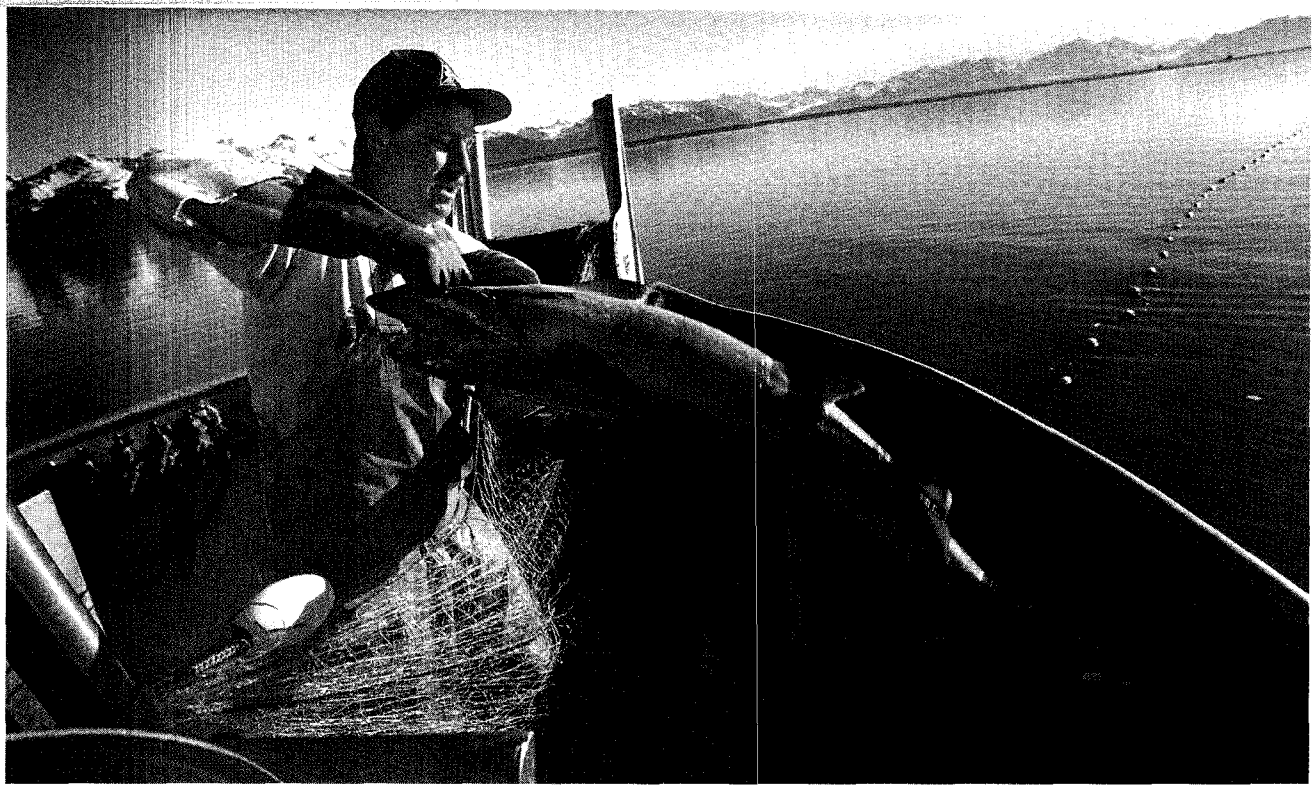


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FOOD

Salmon Time

Our correspondent ventures to Alaska to learn when to eat wild salmon—and how to find it even when it's not in season

BY CORBY KUMMER

This month is the tail end of the season for most fresh-caught wild salmon. Summertime wild salmon is prized because it is at its peak of physical development. Its muscle is toned and its fat content is at its lifetime high, after a few years of foraging in the open seas to build strength for the arduous trek upriver, at the end of which the fish will spawn exactly where it was born. Its color is at its brightest and rosiest. Caught sooner, in the sea while it is still feeding, the salmon's texture will be softer. Caught later, during its voyage upstream, the fish's color will be off and the fat stores depleted.

Generations of diners have feasted on this seasonal bounty, but dams and other habitat degradation have made vast stocks of Pacific Northwest salmon, and all wild Northeast Atlantic salmon, virtually extinct. So freshly caught wild salmon is available legally for only a brief time each year. Chefs set their calendars to the appearance of the first wild salmon with the kind of excitement once

generated by the arrival of Beaujolais nouveau when French wines were still in vogue. If anything, chefs are more impatient than ever for wild-salmon season to start, and more reluctant to see it end, and for good reason: farmed Atlantic salmon, which in just twenty-five years has overtaken the world market, is almost always mushy, bland, flabby—criminally dull. I gave up ordering it several years ago, when I decided that no amount of pineapple salsa could render it acceptable, let alone enjoyable.

Yet two winters ago I began noting a curious phenomenon in the Northeast, where Maine is known for its salmon farms and the commercial harvesting of wild Atlantic salmon has been illegal for years: wild salmon turning up on menus in December, February, April—completely outside the usual season. Chefs scoffed at my suggestion that the fish had been frozen, insisting that their irreproachable vendors knew the fish to be both wild and shipped without ever having seen a freezer. (Not that frozen is neces-

sarily a bad thing, as I learned years ago when first looking into the subject: if frozen quickly and properly, fish can taste fresher than bruised, badly chilled fish that waits days to reach a processor.) But clear frauds—farmed salmon passed off as wild in supermarkets, as discovered in stings by *The New York Times* and others—made me skeptical. Those frauds, and my own curiosity about when wild salmon was really available, made me wonder what “wild salmon” really means now. What is the best way to catch and keep it, and when is the best time to eat it?

In June I went to Alaska, home of the world's largest wild-salmon industry, to find out what the fish looks like up close and taste some of it before it boarded a plane. I attended Copper River Nouveau, an annual benefit for the Prince William Sound Science Center, in Cordova, a former mining depot and now fishing capital accessible only by boat or plane. At the Saturday-night dinner, thirty pounds of donated king salmon fillets, the most valuable kind (last year these fillets were selling at a retail price of \$25 a pound), were the main attraction, complemented by a lobster-saffron sauce. The simple but elegant meal was cooked and served by Jack Amon and Van Hale, chef and manager respectively of Marx Bros. Cafe, in Anchorage, often called Alaska's best

TIM MATSU/AFPN

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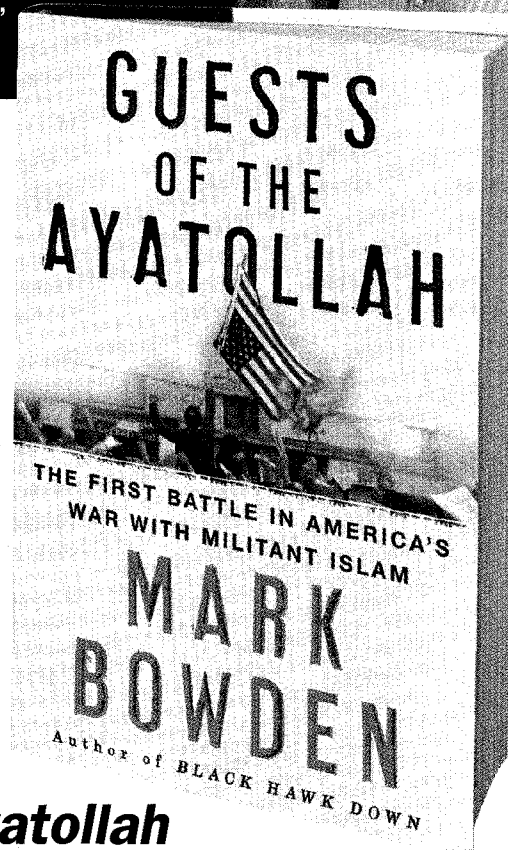
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THE FIVE MAIN PACIFIC SALMON

And how they taste

Salmon is valued by its fat content, which always corresponds with richness in the mouth (though not invariably with best flavor). Here are the five major Pacific salmon varieties, listed in order of richness:

King (chinook). The lushest fresh salmon, king is the highest in fat and usually the most expensive, prized for its silken, melting texture, which is almost like smoked salmon.

Sockeye (red). With a deep, natural color, sockeye is lower in fat but still high overall, allowing the flavor to better come through. Many salmon lovers, including me, consider this the best salmon-eating experience.

Coho (silver). A comer, according to Bill Webber and Thea Thomas, independent Cordovan fishermen. It's already prized by sport fishermen for its fight, and soon, the Cordovans hope, by diners for its mild but distinctive flavor. The most widely available autumn fresh salmon.

Pink (humpback). So delicate and pale that Thomas compares it to sole—which she does not mean as a compliment. She recalls a tasting for food writers at which many rated pink the highest. "How could they?" she asks. The likely answer: "A lot of these people had never had salmon in their life."

Chum (dog). Like pink, chum is fished in high numbers and is lower in fat than other varieties; when it spawns in intertidal waters, it doesn't need to build up energy to swim upstream. Its roe, however, is the most valued of the five varieties, because of its size and flavor. After being strained and separated, the eggs make particularly good *ikura*—the fat, bright-orange pearls familiar in sushi rolls.

restaurant. Amon made the donated fish go a long way, serving it in three-ounce portions, which were in fact ample, given its richness: outside of smoked salmon or salmon packed in oil, king salmon is the lushest salmon experience a diner can have. Brash and fun-loving characters, Amon and Hale come to the benefit almost every year, happy to donate their services; they love Cordova and its salmon. Drinking from the jeroboam of WesMar Olivet Lane pinot noir they had taken by hand on the plane from Anchorage, they clearly appreciated the fisherwomen swishing down the aisles wearing padded silver fish costumes, attracting bids for the art and books and such at the science center's benefit auction. I, meanwhile, gobbled all the leftover pieces of salmon I could snatch while pretending to help clean up.

Like many beautiful, remote places, Cordova is full of characters, many of them erudite eccentrics and most of them united by a passion for fishing and the environment. They speak eloquently about their fishing boats and about which netting and processing method is best—everyone of every age seems to know a lot about fishing. People come for a summer, work at a fish-processing plant or on a fishing boat or volunteer at the science center, and decide to stay. (Winter, of course, is the challenge, and many of the fishermen without families spend a few months each year in, for instance, Mexico.) There's a thriving independent bookstore/café/art gallery run by the former mayor and his wife; a small museum where you can learn about the town's mining past and see photos of the first Iceworm Festival, in 1961; and excellent general and hardware stores.

Unless you go to Copper River Nouveau, or the Wild! Salmon Festival, in July, however, finding fresh salmon in Cordova is tough. Almost all of it gets shipped to market, like coffee beans in coffee-producing countries. You might be able to order some at the restaurant of the Reluctant Fisherman Inn, a former motel now being remodeled by a retired crab fisherman and his wife. But in a local market the closest you'll come to fresh salmon are the superb and generous chunks of lightly smoked sockeye—which I prefer to king for its meatier

texture and more authoritative, if slightly less rich, flavor—or coho, another good-flavored species, canned at plants in town and sold at nearly every Alaskan souvenir shop. (You can buy jars of a particularly good one—cold smoked over alder wood by William Bailey III, a fisherman and now an owner of a fish-processing plant—at www.copperriverseafood.com.) Locals who don't fish but want salmon make informal or barter arrangements with their fishing neighbors.

Cordova needs salmon to survive, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game works to manage the wild stocks carefully. The science center, which conducts research on salmon populations, benefited from an influx of funding in the wake of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, in 1989 (the center administers the Oil Spill Recovery Institute). The spill changed the life of the city, as it did the whole of Prince William Sound. Salmon stocks came back after the spill, though other previously important fishing stocks, including her-ring—smaller than the familiar Atlantic kind, and valuable in the Asian market for its roe—did not, or not in numbers to sustain commercial fishing. Today salmon fishing is permitted only during strictly regulated periods, or "openers," which are announced by the local Department of Fish and Game office only after it determines that enough salmon have begun the trip up the Copper River to keep populations stable. The office counts almost every fish using sonar equipment placed near the mouth of the river. The fishermen pay thousands of dollars for their permits, and rely on the money they make during fishing season—unusually long on the Copper River, from roughly mid-May until October—to last through the year. A friend who is in the industry told me that in an extremely good season a successful fisherman can make \$125,000, but more like \$50,000 in an average one, and even less in a bad one, when stocks are low and openers few.

Copper River got a head start on other areas in the state that also have very fine salmon, including Sitka and Bristol Bay. The promotional effort—instigated by Jon Rowley, a Seattle-based bon vivant, fish expert, and marketing wizard—began in 1983, before the oil spill and before the cataclysmic rise of farmed

DAVID HILLS NET

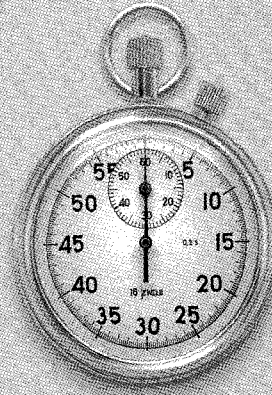
Atlantic salmon. Rowley told fishermen and processors: Make people understand the connection between where fish is caught and how it tastes, and make sure the fish is as good as it can be, by improving the ways it is caught, handled, stored, and shipped.

Rowley and others apply the idea of *terroir*—that you can taste geography in wine—to wild-caught fish, an appealing notion. But for diners what matters more than the geographic origin is the species (see box, “The Five Main Pacific Salmon”) and the fact that Pacific salmon is a wild animal that naturally builds muscle and forages for its food. It is not, in other words, confinement-raised “veal”—as Glenn Hollowell, a former fisherman and now a biologist at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, calls farmed Atlantic salmon. All salmon farming is outlawed in Alaska (FRIENDS DON’T LET FRIENDS EAT FARMED FISH, goes one T-shirt slogan).

Hatcheries may seem a lot like fish farms, but Hollowell and others I spoke with drew a very large distinction between the two. For several months, Alaskan hatcheries feed fry, which are bred from wild stocks near their natural spawning grounds. The fish are then set free to forage like their counterparts in the open seas. The release of hatchery fish into the ocean, Hollowell told me, has helped Alaskan salmon fishing to survive as an industry, by reducing pressure on wild stocks.

Do hatchery salmon taste different? Although the department is able to tell which are hatchery fish (a changing of the water temperature at the hatchery in the first month of their lives creates an identifiable mark on their earbones), buyers and diners can’t. Hollowell, and a number of fishermen, insisted to me that hatchery fish are indistinguishable from completely wild ones in terms of both appearance and eating quality. Hatchery fish, Hollowell said, gain 99.9 percent of their weight while feeding in the ocean, and “thus are essentially wild salmon.”

The other important distinction for diners is the care with which salmon is caught and processed from the moment its snout hits a net. As part of his original marketing strategy, Jon Rowley



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advocated then-avant-garde methods that have now become almost standard: pulling up nets frequently, so fish don't die in the net or bleed internally, which damages flavor; bleeding, eviscerating, and chilling them immediately, rather than hours or even days later; shipping them directly to customers or delivering them to the processing plant rather than to tenders hired by the plants, thus reducing the time salmon waits before being "H and G'd," or "headed and gutted." Bringing ice on board was itself a novelty for many fishermen, and so was immediate bleeding and eviscerating. Both are part of keeping fish in the condition that chefs talk about with gusto, "pre-rigor," so that they can be cooked soon after going through rigor mortis, ensuring the finest texture and freshest flavor.

Some fishermen in Cordova are now shipping their catches directly to chefs. I watched Bill Webber, a boatbuilder in winter and high-tech fisherman in season, execute the "princess cut"—trimming off the head in a graceful curve—at cutting stations onboard his boat, which he has also outfitted with a special tube to transport fish to a holding tank with circulating fresh seawater, so they don't get bruised. Webber, a third-generation Cordova fisherman, has taken fishing to entrepreneurial heights: from his boat he e-mails pictures of fish he has caught to chefs to ask which ones they want; he uses insulated bubble-wrap liners for shipping boxes, at a cost of \$4.50 each, to extend the frozen life of his ice packs; and he drives the boxes to the airport for Alaska Airlines and FedEx's "Gold Rush Service," so that the fish can arrive at restaurants within forty-eight hours of being taken out of the water.

Other fishermen are also improving their processing methods in order to maintain a market in a world of farmed fish. Some processing plants pay a premium for fish iced on the boat; they transport salmon from boats to plants through vacuum tubes rather than with the one-tined pitchforks on display in the Cordova museum.

But the cost of the freshness ensured by expensive box liners and rush service is high (even aside from the cost per fish of sparkling specimens, and the \$35 and up restaurants charge diners per

portion). Farmed salmon may be unpalatable, prone to disease, bad for the seabeds their waste pollutes, and dangerous for wild stocks. Already, escaped farmed Atlantic salmon have extensively interbred with the few remaining wild stocks in the North Atlantic, and might even be penetrating Pacific populations. British Columbia, adjacent to Alaska, does allow fish farming, and farms both Atlantic and Pacific salmon; Atlantic salmon have frequently been reported to be swimming in Alaskan waters.

But farmed fish must be taken into serious consideration by any ecologically and economically conscious cook. Wild stocks of any fish cannot be taken for granted, as Charles Clover writes in *The End of the Line: How Overfishing Is Changing the World and What We Eat* (in a very brief appendix on choosing fish, similar to the guides issued by the Monterey Bay Aquarium, at www.mbayaq.org, Clover puts Pacific salmon on his list of "Fish to Eat With a Clear Conscience"), and fish farms offer a way of providing affordable protein to the world's population.

Are any wild salmon allowed to be harvested in the winter? Yes, I learned: chinook salmon caught in the open sea by troller boats while the fish are still feeding and not fully grown. But the method is painstaking, and the boats small and, in the winter, few; last year just 1 percent of the Alaska catch was troll caught, whereas "wild salmon" is now on restaurant menus year-round. Chances are very good that anything you order from now until next June will have been farmed or frozen, unless the chef knows what "troll caught" means and the entrée is expensive. This winter I plan to quiz chefs and their vendors about species and catching methods, to gauge whether fraud to chefs is as common as fraud to shoppers—and then wait till May to eat salmon. I left Cordova convinced not only that I should avoid farmed salmon but also that I should look for salmon that's Alaskan, in the summer and early fall. Yes, it's a short season for such a great food I could be happy eating every day. But at least it's longer than tomato season. ▀

Corby Kummer is a senior editor of *The Atlantic*.

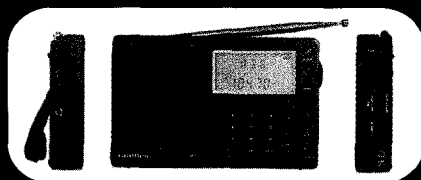
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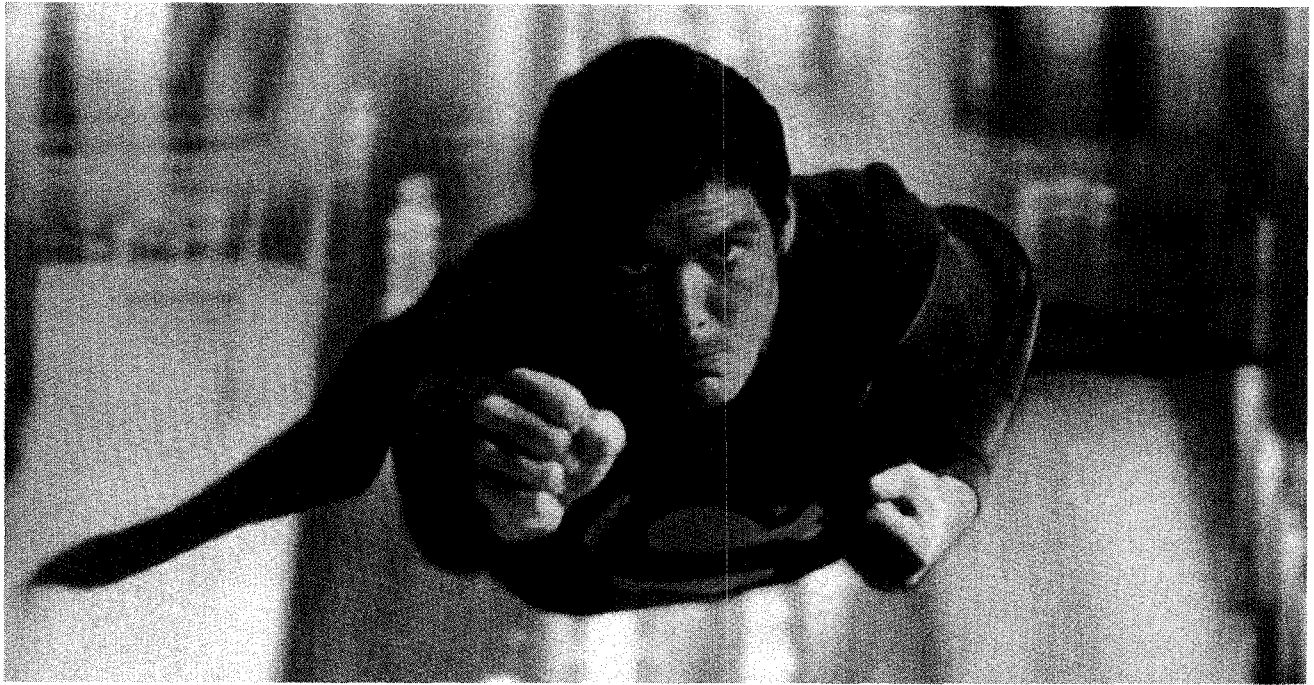
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COMMERCE AND CULTURE

Superhero Worship

Once the province of Garbo and Astaire, movie glamour now comes from Superman, Spider-Man, and Storm

BY VIRGINIA POSTREL

When *Superman* debuted in 1978, it invented a whole new movie genre—and a new kind of cinematic magic. Today, hundreds of millions of dollars depend on the heroic box-office performances of costumed crusaders whom Hollywood once thought worthy only of kiddie serials or campy parodies. The two *Spider-Man* movies rank among the top ten of all time for gross domestic receipts, and *X-Men: The Last Stand* and *Superman Returns* are among this year's biggest hits.

Superhero comics have been around since Irving Thalberg and Louis B. Mayer ruled the back lot, but only recently has Hollywood realized the natural connection between superhero comics and movies. It's not just that both are simultaneously visual and verbal media; that formal connection would apply equally to the "serious" graphic novels and sequential art that want nothing to do with crime fighters in form-fitting outfits. Cinema isn't just a good medium for translating graphic novels.

It's specifically a good medium for *superheroes*. On a fundamental, emotional level, superheroes, whether in print or on film, serve the same function for their audience as Golden Age movie stars did for theirs: they create glamour.

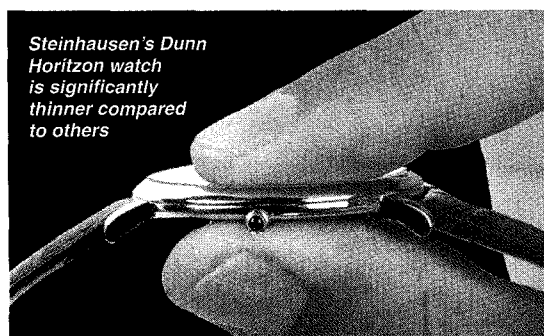
If that sounds crazy, it's because we tend to forget what glamour is really about. Glamour isn't beauty or luxury; those are only specific manifestations for specific audiences. Glamour is an imaginative process that creates a specific, emotional response: a sharp mixture of projection, longing, admiration, and aspiration. It evokes an audience's hopes and dreams and makes them seem attainable, all the while maintaining enough distance to sustain the fantasy. The elements that create glamour are not specific styles—bias-cut gowns or lacquered furniture—but more general qualities: grace, mystery, transcendence. To the right audience, Halle Berry is more glamorous commanding the elements as Storm in the *X-Men* movies than she is walking the red carpet in a designer gown.

"You'll believe a man can fly," promised *Superman's* trailers. Brian Chase, a forty-year-old Los Angeles lawyer and comic-book enthusiast, recalls, "They *did* make you believe it." He says that after seeing the movie for the first time, when he was thirteen, he "ran back from the theater jumping over things. I was embarrassingly convinced. I projected myself into it, and I was not going to let it go for the world." That is the emotional effect of glamour, and it's something superhero comics have delivered since *Superman* hit print in 1938. The *Superman* movie's marketing slogan was thus more than a promise of convincing special effects. It was a pledge to engage the audience's dreams without ridicule. In *Superman*, only the villains were silly. A decade later, Tim Burton's operatic *Batman* made even the clown-faced Joker seem genuinely scary. Influenced by Frank Miller's reinvention of Batman as the Dark Knight, Burton's *Batman* movies portrayed a dangerous world in desperate need of a masked hero. Instead of the campy straight man of the 1960s television series or the tame Mister Rogers of the 1950s comic books, Batman was again a glamorous creature of the night, powerful and mysterious.

The superhero movies that have followed, like the comics from which they were derived, have engaged their subjects without emotional reservation. They may

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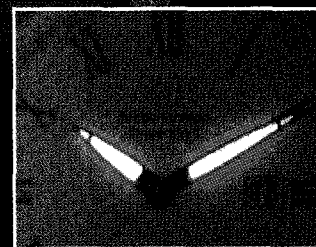
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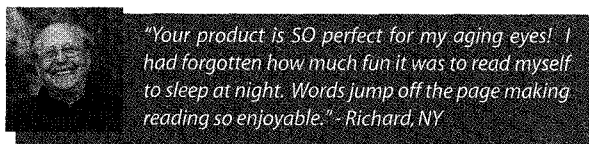
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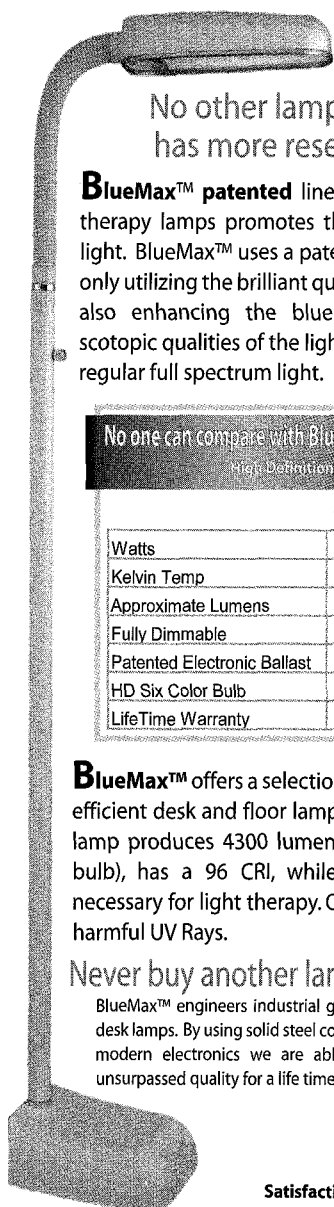
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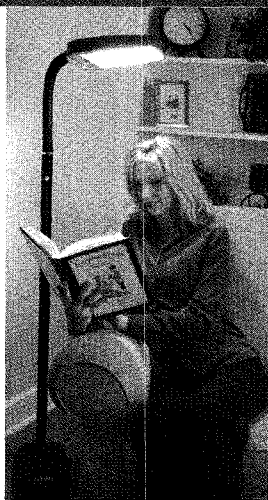
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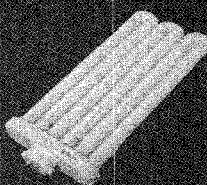
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have humor (Marvel comics like *Spider-Man* and *The Fantastic Four* are famous for it), but they lack the kind of irony that punctures glamour and makes the audience feel foolish for its suspension of disbelief, the sort of campy mockery exemplified by the *Batman* television show or Joel Schumacher's disastrous *Batman & Robin*, featuring a smirking George Clooney in the lead.

The superhero fans who wear costumes to comics conventions, buy miniatures of their favorite characters, or line up for artists' autographs aren't themselves glamorous. But neither were the Depression-era housewives who bought knockoffs of Joan Crawford's gowns or wrote fan letters to Gary Cooper. And neither are the *InStyle* readers who copy Natalie Portman's latest haircut or wear a version of Halle Berry's Oscar dress to the prom. But all are acting on glamour's promise. Glamour is, to quote a fashion blurb, "all about transcending the everyday." The whole point of movie glamour was—and is—escape. "What the adult American female chiefly asks of the movies is the opportunity to escape by reverie from an existence which she finds insufficiently interesting," wrote Margaret Farrand Thorp in *America at the Movies* (1939). Movies are "the quickest release from a drab, monotonous, unsatisfying environment in dreaming of an existence which is rich, romantic, glamorous."

Superheroes appeal to a different sort of romanticism. Brian Chase draws a distinction between himself and other members of a hip e-mail list called Glamour: "Their idea of glamour would be to get invited to the right party. To me growing up, the idea of glamour was to be the guy who could save the right party from a meteor." Says Richard Neal, owner of Zeus Comics, an upscale comics store in Dallas, "It's not just superpowers but dashing good looks, villains you can fight, getting aggression out." (Buff and business-savvy, Neal bears no resemblance to the classic comics-store proprietor, represented so memorably on *The Simpsons*.)

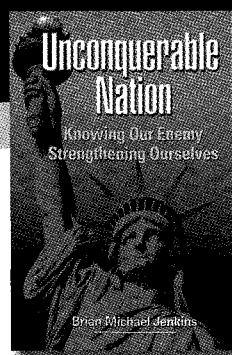
Superheroes are masters of their bodies and their physical environment. They often work in teams, providing an ideal of friendship based on competence,

shared goals, and complementary talents. They're special, and they know it. "Their *true* identities, the men in colorful tights, were so elemental, so universal, so transcendent of the worlds that made them wear masks that they carried with them an unprecedented optimism about the value of one's inner reality," writes Gerard Jones in *Men of Tomorrow: Geeks, Gangsters and the Birth of the Comic Book*. "We all knew that Clark Kent was just a game played by Superman and that the only guy who mattered was that alien who showed up in Metropolis with no history and no parents."

Comic-book heroes, like all glamorous icons, cater to "dreams of flight and transformation and escape." Those words are from one of the best books ever written on glamour: Michael Chabon's 2000 novel, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*. Like many a Hollywood story, *Kavalier and Clay* is wise to the perils of trying to live out glamorous dreams in the real world, again and again showing the tragicomic effects of such attempts. Early on, for instance, young Joe Kavalier almost drowns while attempting a Houdini-like escape designed to gain entrance to what he imagines is a glamorous private club for magicians. (It is, in fact, a rather run-down place whose dining room "smelled of liver and onions.") On the eve of World War II, Joe and his cousin Sammy create a successful comic-book hero called the Escapist, whose villainous foes include Hitler himself. Their glamorous illusion is that such fights are easy to win.

Chabon explicitly defends the escapism of comics. After the war, his Kavalier reflects:

Having lost his mother, father, brother, and grandfather, the friends and foes of his youth, his beloved teacher Bernard Kornblum, his city, his history—his home—the usual charge leveled against comic books, that they offered *merely an easy escape from reality*, seemed to Joe actually to be a powerful argument on their behalf ... It was a mark of how fucked-up and broken was the world—the reality—that had swallowed his home and his family that such a feat of escape, by no means easy to pull off, should remain so universally despised.



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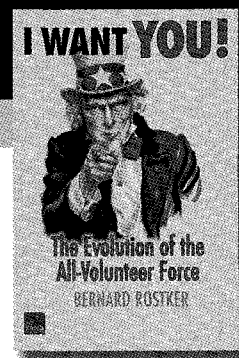
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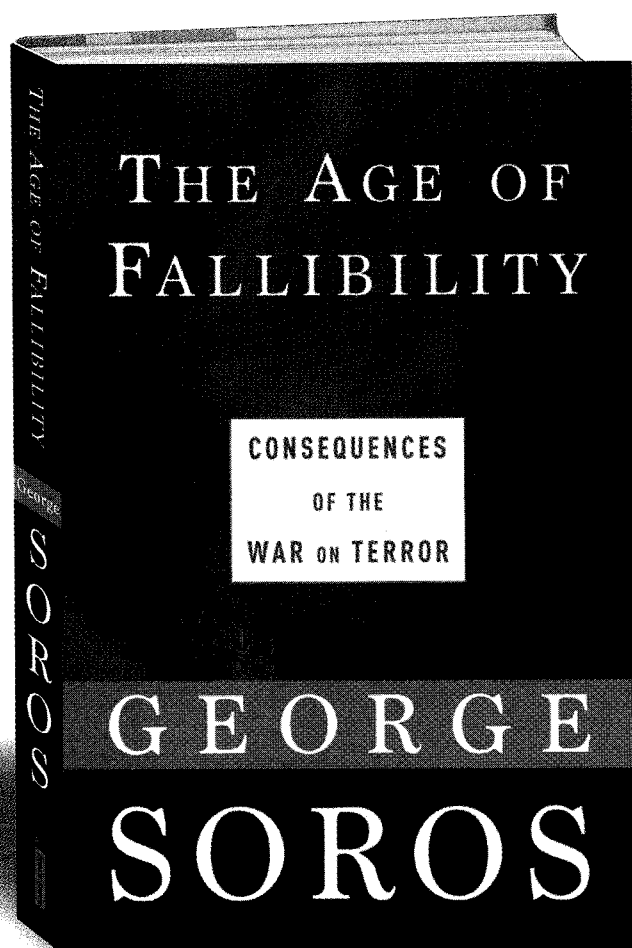
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Still, glamour is always vulnerable to those who love it. The more we're drawn to a glamorous person, place, or thing, the more we scrutinize it, seeking to fill in the details—which ultimately destroys the mystery and grace. Someone will always look for the hidden flaws, the seamy side of the story. Hence the demand for gossip about Princess Diana's bulimia or Jennifer Lopez's romantic problems. These *Behind the Music*-style revelations replace the transcendence of glamour with the mundane problems of mere celebrity. Beyond these grubby details is a more mythic kind of debunking: the artistic revisionism that warns of glamour's dangers and disappointments. The power of such revisionism, however, depends on the emotional pull of the original. Someone who knows little and cares even less about Hollywood dreams will miss the pity and terror of *Sunset Boulevard*. Someone who scorns superheroes as infantile won't understand the scary wonder of *Watchmen*, the brilliant 1987 graphic novel in which Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons deconstruct superheroes. To the wrong audience, glamour, even revisionist glamour, will seem like camp.

One way to balance the real and ideal while preserving glamour is to give the audience an insider's view. So superhero comics now tend to situate their stories in a world like our own, with ubiquitous, sensationalist media and inescapable trade-offs between personal and professional life. To their audience inside the comics, the superheroes are powerful and mysterious celebrities subject to public adulation and tabloid attacks. The real-world audience, by contrast, gets a glimpse behind the mask, a chance to identify with the character and to experience glamour once removed—to imagine *what it would be like to be glamorous*, and how much hard work, sacrifice, and attention to detail that seemingly effortless power requires. This double vision acknowledges the art behind the illusion. Glamour may look easy, but it never is. ▀

Virginia Postrel is a contributing editor of The Atlantic and the author of The Substance of Style and The Future and Its Enemies. Her blog, the Dynamist, can be found at www.dynamist.com/weblog.



Tyranny. — Arrogance. — And What Must Be Done.

A MESSAGE FROM GEORGE SOROS:

AMERICA has fallen into the hands of extremist ideologues, led by Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who believe that the truth can be successfully manipulated.... The root cause of trouble is a false metaphor, the war on terror. It has done terrible

damage to our standing in the world and endangered our open society at home; yet it is still generally accepted as the natural response to 9/11.... We cannot start repairing the damage until we repudiate the false metaphor of the war on terror. We must do more than just revert to the policies we pursued prior to

9/11. We must recognize that as the dominant power in the world we have a special responsibility.... If the United States fails to provide the right kind of leadership our civilization may destroy itself. That is the unpleasant reality that confronts us.

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TECHNOLOGY

Artificial Intelligentsia

How the Internet is fitting its users with mental eyeglasses—and letting them see new vistas of knowledge in the process

BY JAMES FALLOWS

In one way I know of, the Internet has improved my personality. In the olden days, I would get annoyed (and show it) when I heard a song I knew but couldn't remember who was singing, or when I channel surfed across an old movie and wondered who a familiar-looking character actor was (who is the creepy guy who tussles with Patrick Swayze on the subway in *Ghost*?). The question would lodge in my brain and make me cranky until the answer popped up hours or days later, or until I forgot about it. Now, if I'm at a computer, I can scratch the mental itch in seconds (answer: the late Vincent Schiavelli), and even while walking around I can query a search engine from my PDA.

In another way I'm all too aware of, the Internet has worsened my disposition,

or at least my ability to behave like a grown-up. In principle, time away from a broadband connection should be precious time, because there are fewer distractions. In reality, it makes me nervous, because there's not a new link to click on or a blog update to check (for other people, being out of e-mail range for even a minute is anxiety provoking). Nearly ten years ago, Linda Stone, then an executive with Microsoft, introduced the term *continuous partial attention* to describe this modern predicament—and that was before BlackBerries and WiFi. Now, the sign of a serious meeting is whether participants are forced to turn off their PDAs and laptop WiFi receivers.

No doubt technology is also changing our behavior in ways we ourselves may not be aware of but that are obvious

to outsiders. For instance, I can guess from two blocks away that a driver is talking on a cell phone, and I'm rarely wrong. And everyone who checks e-mail on a handheld device thinks it can be done discreetly, but no one who is present when this happens is fooled. Certainly not my wife, who will scream the next time I glance at my BlackBerry while "listening" to her.

What I'm leading up to is a consideration less of these immediate personality changes than of the long-term interaction between human and machine intelligence—from the side of the equation that usually gets less attention. Since the first mammoth devices were assembled, during World War II, people have struggled to make computers "smarter," and have speculated about how smart they might ultimately become. Fifty years ago, the British mathematician Alan Turing said that computers would be considered fully intelligent when they met this test: a person would submit statements in natural language—"Who's going to win the next election?" "My husband seems distant these days"—and wouldn't be able to tell whether the responses came from

another person or a machine. No computer has ever come close to passing this test. Recently, though, the inventor Raymond Kurzweil made a public bet with Mitchell Kapor, the founder of Lotus, that a computer would pass the Turing test by 2029. Kurzweil's essential argument (derived from his book *The Singularity Is Near*) was that as computers kept doubling in speed and power, and as programmers continually narrowed the gap between machine "intelligence" and human thought, soon almost anything would be possible. Kapor's reply was that human beings differed so totally from machines—they were housed in bodies that felt pleasure and pain, they accumulated experience, they felt emotion, much of their knowledge was tacit rather than expressed—that computers would not pass the Turing test by 2029, if ever. (Their back-and-forth exchanges, with views from others, are available at www.kurzweilai.net.)

A recent variant of this argument concerns whether the Internet is already fostering an unanticipated and important form of artificial intelligence. The 2004 book *The Wisdom of Crowds*, by James Surowiecki of *The New Yorker*, is the clearest explanation of this development, variously known as "collective intelligence" or "the hive mind." The logic here is almost identical to that of Adam Smith-style capitalism. Smith argued that millions of buyers and sellers, each pursuing his own interest, would together produce more goods, more efficiently, than any other arrangement could. The Internet has made possible a similar efficient marketplace for ideas, reputations, and information online. Millions of bloggers create links to other sites and thereby cast marketplace votes for the relevance and plausibility of those sites. Thousands of editors refine each other's entries in Wikipedia (as described last month in these pages by Marshall Poe). Together, these and other suppliers of collective intelligence can create more knowledge, with less bias and over a wider span of disciplines, than any group of experts could.

Or so it is claimed by most leaders of Internet companies. The belief in the efficacy and accuracy of collective wisdom is practically as central to the

growth of today's Internet companies as the belief in the efficiency of the market is to the New York Stock Exchange. In different forms it lies behind Google's "PageRank" system for assessing Web sites, eBay's measures of a merchant's trustworthiness, Amazon's book recommendations, and other hallmarks of the modern Internet industry. "A way to look at these social filtering systems is to think of them as generating millions of 'most popular' lists, and finding the most-popular items for people like you," Greg Linden, who designed Amazon's recommendations system, told me in an e-mail. "Normal best-seller lists are uninteresting to me because my tastes are not generic. But a best-selling list for people who buy some of the same books I do—that is likely to be interesting."

Recently Jaron Lanier, an essayist on technology, launched a broadside against this faith and set off a major debate within the tech community. At the end of May the online publication *Edge* published Lanier's essay "Digital Maoism," which predicted that collective intelligence would have the same deadening and anticreative effect as political collectivism in general. The heart of this argument was that measures of mass popularity could be accurate in certain limited circumstances, but not in a large variety of others. *Edge* also published many rebuttals, and the debate goes on. The opposing camps and positions are amazingly similar to those in the endless economic debate between libertarian free-market absolutists, who think that any market outcome must be right, and those who say, "Yes, but ..." and start listing cases of market failure.

My sympathies are with Lanier, but here is the intriguing part: even as we debate the limits on how much, and how many kinds of, intelligence human beings can ultimately build into their networks and machines, we have to recognize what computers can do already—and how that eventually may change us.

The most obvious and unquestionable achievement in Internet "intelligence" is the *Jeopardy!*-style retrieval of "spot knowledge." If you want to know what other movies Vincent Schiavelli was in before and after *Ghost*, any

FROM THE TECH TOOLBOX

When Ask.com was known as Ask Jeeves, I had a hard time taking it seriously. Its butler logo was the uncool opposite of Google's minimalist hipness, and its basic premise—that it could imagine in advance the questions users might ask, match the query a user typed in to one of its imagined questions, and give a prepared response—seemed doomed, like an attempt to learn a foreign language by mastering all the possible sentences you might hear. (As a fallback, the old Ask Jeeves would conduct a standard keyword search based on the user's query.)

But its relaunched version, introduced early this year, is worthy of serious attention. In addition to its "Zoom" feature, which lets you easily narrow or broaden the topic of a standard search or a question, it has several other features that are interesting, useful, or both. Its mapping service is like those from Google, Yahoo, or MSN—but also offers walking directions from point to point, avoiding the indirect routes you might have to take by car. It has a customizable toolbar that permits easy one-click searches for weather in your area, shopping, maps, and so on. A "Binoculars" feature gives thumbnail previews of the Web sites returned by a search, which often saves time in picking out the one you really want. (You can create the same effect for Google by downloading a GooglePreview extension.) I have found that its image-search system gives better and more relevant results than others I have tried.

All of today's mainstream search engines are good, and none of them is perfect. But the new Ask.com deserves a look. —J.F.

search engine will point you to a list. As computing power becomes smaller, cheaper, and easier to embed in other products, nearly everything we use will eventually come with the ability to pull relevant data from search engines. The GPS receivers in cars that tell us about the restaurant or rest stop we're passing are early indicators. Refrigerators will retrieve recipes for the ingredients inside; household appliances will download pages from repair manuals.

There is a second area in which Internet-borne knowledge is becoming

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steadily more impressive: categorization, or pattern recognition. In general, deciding how different things are similar, and similar things are different, is extremely difficult for computers. Any three-year-old can instantly tell a cow from a horse; few computers can. But related developments in several search engines have provided the beginnings of useful machine-created categorization.

A search engine called Clusty, founded by Carnegie Mellon computer scientists and based in Pittsburgh, returns its search results grouped by topic category. Type in "theory of evolution," for instance, and it will tell you which sites discuss Charles Darwin, which cover modern developments in the theory, and which discuss its relationship with the Bible. An experimental search engine developed at the University of Maryland, at tinyurl.com/qkphr, also provides useful categorized results. Ask.com, formerly known as Ask Jeeves, has a very useful "Zoom" feature. Type in "theory of evolution" there, and it will suggest that you might want to narrow the search for information about the mechanics of natural selection, or broaden it to a general query about the beginnings of life. Cnet's news site has a feature called "Big Picture." After you enter a query, it produces a concept map showing the related topics to explore. Grokker was a pioneer in producing such concept maps, and remains a useful and reliably interesting way to display the overlaps and divergences among items discovered by a Web search. Raymond Kurzweil's site employs an idea map of its own. When I'm doing a search to develop a theme and not to check spot knowledge, I have found that these categorizing sites—especially Ask.com—save me time in getting where I want to go.

If omnipresent retrieval of spot data means there's less we have to remember, and if categorization systems do some of the first-stage thinking for us, what will happen to our brains? I've chosen to draw an optimistic conclusion, from the analogy of eyeglasses. Before corrective lenses were invented, some 700 years ago, bad eyesight was a profound handicap. In effect it meant being disconnected from the wider world, since it was hard to take in knowledge. With

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eyeglasses, this aspect of human fitness no longer mattered in most of what people did. More people could compete, contribute, and be fulfilled.

Something similar has been true with most mechanical inventions: sheer muscle power has mattered less, except for sex appeal, and people weak or strong have been able to live fuller lives.

It could be the same with these new computerized aids to cognition. I love winning when I play along with *Jeopardy!*, so of course I think that spot recall is a crucial part of human smartness. But I know that America's university system has been the envy of the world in part because it relies so *little* on rote memorization. When my father was a practicing physician, I often heard him stress the value of clearing his mind of minutiae he could easily look up. Increasingly we all will be able to look up anything, at any time—and, with categorization, get a head start in thinking about connections.

I can think of one group of people for whom abundant, available facts could serve as eyeglasses: the vast majority of us who are destined to have a harder time remembering as the years go on. Imagine if every photograph came with a touch screen describing what it shows and when it was taken, or if reminders about appointments to keep, pills to take, and similar data could be so embedded in our lives that we wouldn't have to worry about forgetting.

For those without such problems, these new tools could, while perhaps less immediately essential, yet become the modern-day equivalent of the steam engine or the plow—tools that free people from routine chores and give them more time to think, dream, and live. Each previous wave of invention has made humanity more intelligent overall. These may seem like fighting words, but consider: America may have fewer Jeffersons, Adamsses, and Franklins now, but it does have many more people who are literate and can aspire to goals beyond mere survival. The next wave of tech innovation, if it is like all the previous ones, will again make us smarter. If we take advantage of its effects, it might even make us wiser, too. ■

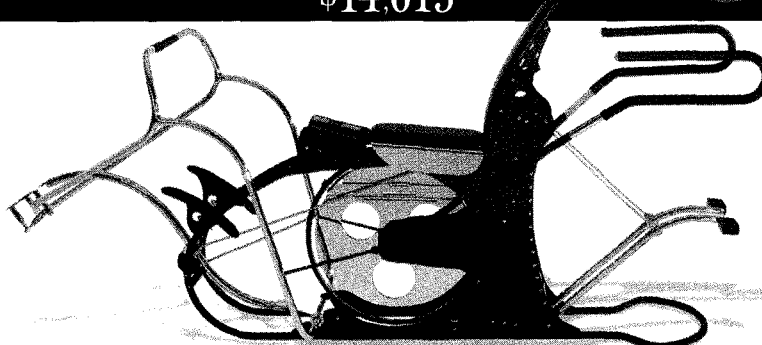
James Fallows is a national correspondent at The Atlantic.

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Making Sinatra Sinatra

Bill Miller (1915–2006)

BY MARK STEYN

Frank Sinatra called himself a “saloon singer,” because that’s where he used to sing, way back when, in Jersey juke joints and roadhouses. Not for long. He was too good, even then. But for a while, if you headed up to the Rustic Cabin on Route 9W in the Garden State, they had this pianist pushing a little half-piano from table to table and the waiter would sing with him and they had a tip jar on the lid and you couldn’t help noticing that the kid sang awful good for a waiter, and pretty soon the singing was earning him, as he figured it, “about fifteen clams a week.”

Thirty, forty, fifty years later, week in, week out, the same singing waiter, with full supporting orchestra, was barreling through a set at some grim rock stadium on the edge of a strip mall in some nondescript suburb. Midway through, the lights would dim, and Frank Sinatra would announce that he now would sing a “saloon song,” and proceed to shrink whichever sterile aircraft hangar he’d been booked into down to the size of those pokey smoky New Jersey saloons of his youth. There were the old props—the tumbler, the cigarette—and the scene setting grew ever more ornate over the years, expanding into an almighty pileup of retro hipsterisms as Sinatra prepared us for the tale of some emblematic long-lost loser whose “chick split, flew the coop, cleaned out his stash, and left him cryin’ into a gallon of Muscatel.” Under the words a tinkly tipsy barroom-piano intro would begin, and Sinatra would invite us to “assume the position of the bartender” and listen to the old, old story:

It’s quarter to three
There’s no one in the place
Except you and me
So set ‘em up, Joe
I got a little story
I think you oughta know.

We all knew the story. But the strange thing was, through the ’60s, ’70s,

’80s, and into the ’90s, no matter how flip the speaking part got, when Sinatra started to sing that first line, the semi-parodic grooviness was all gone, and you were in for the most intense four minutes in the show, intimate and universal, bleak but weirdly exhilarating.

The man playing the piano was Bill Miller, and that intro to “One for My Baby (and One More for the Road)” was his invention. It is a marvelous thing that works at so many levels: it evokes the tinny sound of a saloon piano, and it meanders a little woozily, like a fellow who’s drunk a skinful heading back to the bar for one more, and it also has a kind of bleak, weary acceptance about it, as if both storyteller and barman know that in the end the one buttonholing the other will change nothing. It’s self-aware about its self-pity; it understands that, in everything that matters, it’s already past closing time. And it’s also an acting performance, in that Miller is playing not just the piano accompaniment to the song but also the role of the barroom pianist in the story the singer’s telling. Miller matches the paradox of the vocal performance with one of his own: just as Sinatra gives what Robert Cushman called “a perfectly controlled performance of a man who’s falling apart,” the pianist, under the cover of a rinky-dink saloon piano, provides an amazing harmonic intensity.

That’s a hell of a lot to cram into a few bars. I once tried to say all the above to Bill Miller, and he said: “Yeah.” Oh, well. That’s what he said back in 1951 when he was playing at the Desert Inn in Vegas and Sinatra came by to ask if he’d like to work with him: “Yeah.” He stayed for the best part of half a century, and played Sinatra songs to the very end, dying in Montreal, after a hip break and a heart attack, while in town for a month of shows with Frank Sinatra Jr. Miller was ninety-one and had to be helped from his wheelchair to the

piano stool. But the fingers still worked. A few months after Sinatra’s death, in 1998, Miller returned to the stage for a concert by Frank Jr. The lights were dimmed; the pianist took his seat in the dark, unannounced, and began to play “One for My Baby.” “The audience let out a gasp,” remembered Junior. “They were all Sinatra fans, and they recognized Bill immediately.”

Miller wasn’t exactly unsung. *Au contraire*, seven-eighths into “Mack the Knife,” Frank liked to take a chorus to introduce the musicians:

We got Bill Miller playin’ that piano
And this great big band bringin’ up
the rear
All these bad cats in this band now
They make the greatest sounds you
ever gonna hear ...

But that was pretty much it in the way of public acclaim, aside from onstage references to Miller’s ghostly pallor (“Our pianist is a man we call Suntan Charlie”). Yet Miller and the handful of other guys who made up the Sinatra rhythm section night after night in Vegas and Atlantic City and London and Rome and Rio and Tokyo belong to a very exclusive club. Bill outlasted Ava and Marilyn and Mia and the other dames, and Dino and Sammy and most of the pallies, too. And the musicians got the best snaps for the scrapbook—not the tuxedoed bonhomie and Friars Club kibitzing you see in the pics of Frank and Bob Hope and John Wayne, not the pasta-joint mug shots of Frank and lesser buddies, but Frank at work, *with you!* There’s a great photo of Miller half a century ago, doodling at the keyboard, tie loosened, bleary eyed, cigarette hanging from his lower lip, and Sinatra leaning on the piano, tanned and open shirted, hand in pocket, looking over the sheet music—and beaming with delight. Miller’s running through a number for him, and Sinatra’s liking what he hears, and maybe it’s going to be the next “I Get a Kick Out of You” or “You Make Me Feel So Young.” In other words, Miller is in the act of helping make Sinatra Sinatra.

Miller was born across the water from Sinatra, in Brooklyn, just months earlier. At sixteen, he was billing himself as “Bill Miller, the Ace of Jazz.” At

eighteen, he was the pianist for Larry Funk and His Band of a Thousand Melodies, and then came Red Norvo and Charlie Barnet. Heading home from a gig at the 1940 World's Fair, Miller and the gal he was dating had the car radio on. "Hey, listen," she said, "doesn't that sound good? That's Dick Haymes." Miller said, "No, it's not Dick Haymes. Dick Haymes doesn't sing that good." He had to wait till the end, and the disc jockey's announcement: "All or Nothing at All," by Harry James and His Orchestra, vocal refrain by Frank Sinatra.

A decade later, Sinatra had had it all and was on his way back down to nothing. Miller was the man at the keyboard as Sinatra rebuilt his career. He became celebrated for the saloon piano on a trio of Johnny Mercer three-in-the-morning numbers: "One for My Baby," "Drinking Again," and "Empty Tables." But he was also indispensable to the other side of the singer: the swingin' Sinatra you hear on his up-tempo "Way You Look Tonight." The bassist Chuck Berghoffer once asked Sinatra, "How do you swing so hard? What do you think about?" Sinatra answered, "I just get a cuckoo rhythm section and stay out of the way."

Not exactly. Rather, he rode on top of it, like a surfer coming in on the perfect wave. Miller was always the heart of that side of Frank, playing the rhythmic piano intros that kickstart "The Lady Is a Tramp," or "Lonesome Road," or even "Ol' MacDonald." Yes, that "Ol' MacDonald":

Ol' MacDonald had a farm
Ee-i-ee-i-o
And on that farm he had a chick ...

You can pretty much guess how things develop from there. Plenty of Sinatra scholars loathe that record: why would a guy who could sing Rodgers and Hart record "Ol' MacDonald"? As the detractors see it, it was because he could; it was a power trip, a way of saying "Screw you" to the world. Say what you like about gangsta rap, but even Snoop Dogg isn't arrogant enough to give us "Ol' MacDonald had a farm /



And on that farm he had a ho ..." But I love that "Ol' MacDonald." It builds wonderfully, and Alan and Marilyn Bergman's lyrics, despite boxing themselves into the nursery rhyme's with-a-little-this-here-and-a-little-this-there structure, manage to top each verse with the next:

With a promenade here and a
promenade there
At a square dance, boy, this chick
was no square.

That said, with the best will in the world, "Ol' MacDonald" isn't exactly an interesting tune, and that's where Miller comes in. His piano helps make it such a wild ride. He's like the mechanical hare at the greyhound track, if a mechanical hare could swing: he sets off, and Sinatra takes off too.

In 1964, the pianist's home in Burbank was washed away in a mudslide. The Millers were swept away with it: their teenage daughter, Meredith, made it to the top of a hill, and Bill was rescued hanging from a car, but his wife, Aimee, was only found the following night. Sinatra identified the body and then went to see Miller in the hospital.

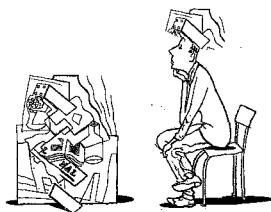
"If it's any consolation," he said, "there wasn't a mark on her." As the laconic Miller liked to tell friends, "It wasn't any consolation." But Sinatra paid the medical expenses and got Miller a new place. And, when they inevitably busted up, in the late '70s, Sinatra hired other pianists but stayed away from "One for My Baby" altogether. Anyone can conduct "My Way" (as Miller did on the hit recording), but Sinatra understood that the truly definitive Sinatra song depended on the presence of another man, Bill Miller. In 1985, Miller returned for "One for My Baby," and one more decade for the road.

There was one last classic recording. The final cut on Sinatra's 1993 *Duets* isn't really a duet at all—or at least not a celebrity duet. Take a chisel to the CD and remove Kenny G's syrupy drooling of "All the Way" on the front of the track, and then sit back as the strings recede and Bill Miller begins his bar-room-piano noodling. It's the best duet on the album—just Frank and Bill—and the latter doesn't even get a credit on the sleeve, just a tiny namecheck deep in the interior of the small print as "Mr. Sinatra's pianist." The voice is rough, its vulnerability deliberately exposed, especially on the last line's long goodbye. But, raw and harrowing as it is, it's a final Sinatra masterpiece. The piano dies away, and the last saloon singer lays down his burden: one for us and one for that long, long road.

Well, that's how it goes
And, Joe, I know you're getting
anxious to close
So thanks for the cheer
I hope you didn't mind my bend-
ing your ear.

Five years later Miller played it at Sinatra's funeral. The familiar introduction, but no voice came in, no "It's quarter to three ..." In all the years Bill Miller had accompanied the familiar words, for the first time ever there was no one in the place except him. ▀

Mark Steyn is a columnist for the Chicago Sun-Times and other publications.



WORD FUGITIVES

by BARBARA WALLRAFF

Who knew that people could get so worked up about the domestic behavior of total strangers? In May a woman described her husband as a "pack rat" and asked for a word for someone, like her, with the opposite tendency.

M. Gunnison Collins, of New York City, wrote, "Having for years resented the unsavory implications of *pack rat*, I relish the chance to label my opposites, who I've always felt lacked some basic degree of human warmth and material sentimentality. I propose we call them *minimatons*."

Jim Tanner, of Fort Collins, Colo., wrote, "My condolences to the pack rat; his wife obviously doesn't appreciate domestic sagacity. Being able to keep stuff, and lots of it, is the reason one maintains a home rather than living in a pod. If God had intended for us to be so cavalier about our possessions, He would not have given us basements or all those little cardboard boxes we'll someday need. The man has married a classic *domorexic*."

Frank Capuzzi, of Severna Park, Md., wrote, "I've had a term for years, and silently invoke it every time my wife accuses me of being a pack rat—which is often. If I'm a pack rat, she's a *wouldchuck*." (This word was a popular suggestion.)

For obvious reasons, a number of other responses shared the animal theme. Eileen Dolan, of Merchantville, N.J., coined *hurl squirrel*; Ethan Keyes, of Hallowell, Maine, *yield mouse*; Barbara Victor, of Arvada, Colo., *meager beaver*; Chris Rooney, of Berkeley, Calif., *spar-supial*; and Cecelia Burokas, of Chicago, *let-gopher*.

Uniquely, Ray Larsen, of Bozeman, Mont., offered "a little testimony in defense of the often-maligned pack rat," genus *Neotoma*. He wrote, "These creatures

usually are described as thieves and hoarders, because they take things for which they have no apparent use. However, sometimes they engage in simple trading. When I was a youngster, my aunt and uncle had a cabin in the mountains. Their tool shed was an occasional target for pack rats, and tools would disappear from the shed. But sometimes other objects would appear in place of the missing items. On one noteworthy occasion the missing tool was a cold chisel,



an object considerably heavier than the average pack rat. The raiding rodent left a stick of dynamite in exchange."

Great story, even if it is off topic. Back to business: Top honors go to Thomas S. G. Lawrence, of Staten Island, N.Y., for his highly original and funny coinage *heave-homemaker*.

Also sought in May was a term for the "property in some relationships that allows two people who haven't spoken in years to simply dive into conversation as if they've not been apart." William R. Phillips, of Seattle, proposed *belongevity* and *extendship*; Penny Geoghan, of Owl's Head, N.Y., *instimacy*; Jeff Toder, of Calabasas, Calif., *simchatato*; Caroline Harris, of Lafayette, Calif., *spantaneity*; and Pati

Trahern, of Prescott, Ariz., *transfriend-mentalism*.

Top honors go to Norm Tabler, of Indianapolis, because his word is so much fun to say. He wrote, "In Latin *nunc pro tunc* means 'now for then.' The concept here is *nuncprotunctuality*."

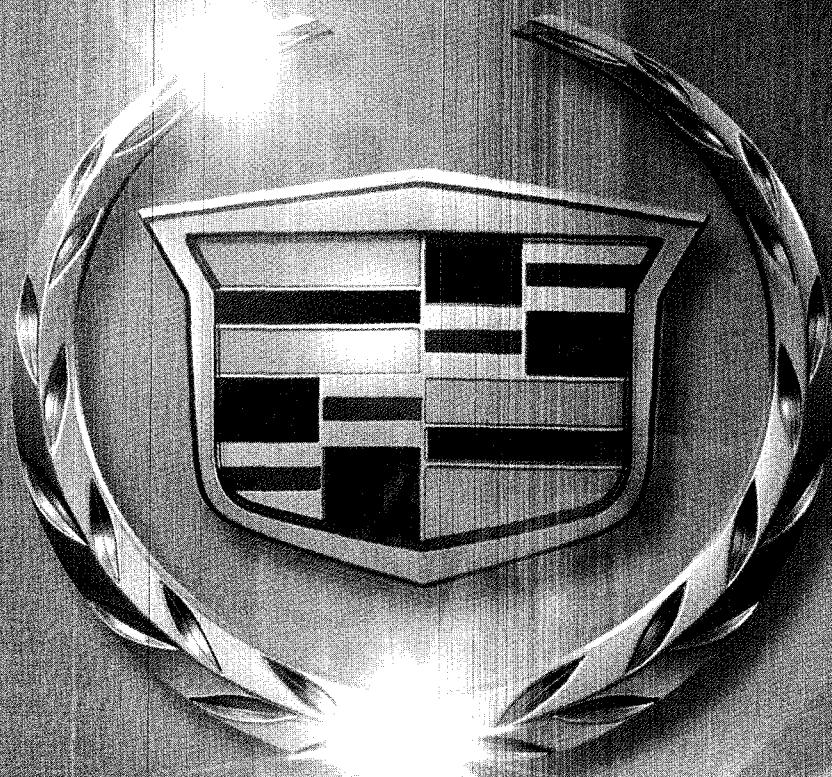
Now PETE ANDERSON, of Joliet, Ill., writes, "I'm looking for a word that describes the one husband within a social group whose excessive generosity or thoughtfulness toward his wife makes all the other husbands in the group look very bad by comparison. I'm thinking of, say, the guy who buys his wife a big diamond ring for their tenth anniversary or jets her off to Paris for an impromptu romantic vacation, while the rest of the wives have to settle for flowers bought at the gas station on the husband's way home from work, or a fishing vacation in Wisconsin."

And DANIEL J. SCHEUB, of Dixon, Ill., writes, "Does the barrier erected by headphones have a name? As a semipermanent resident of this tiny country, I often wonder." We'll accept names either for the barrier or for the "country" that a headphone wearer inhabits.

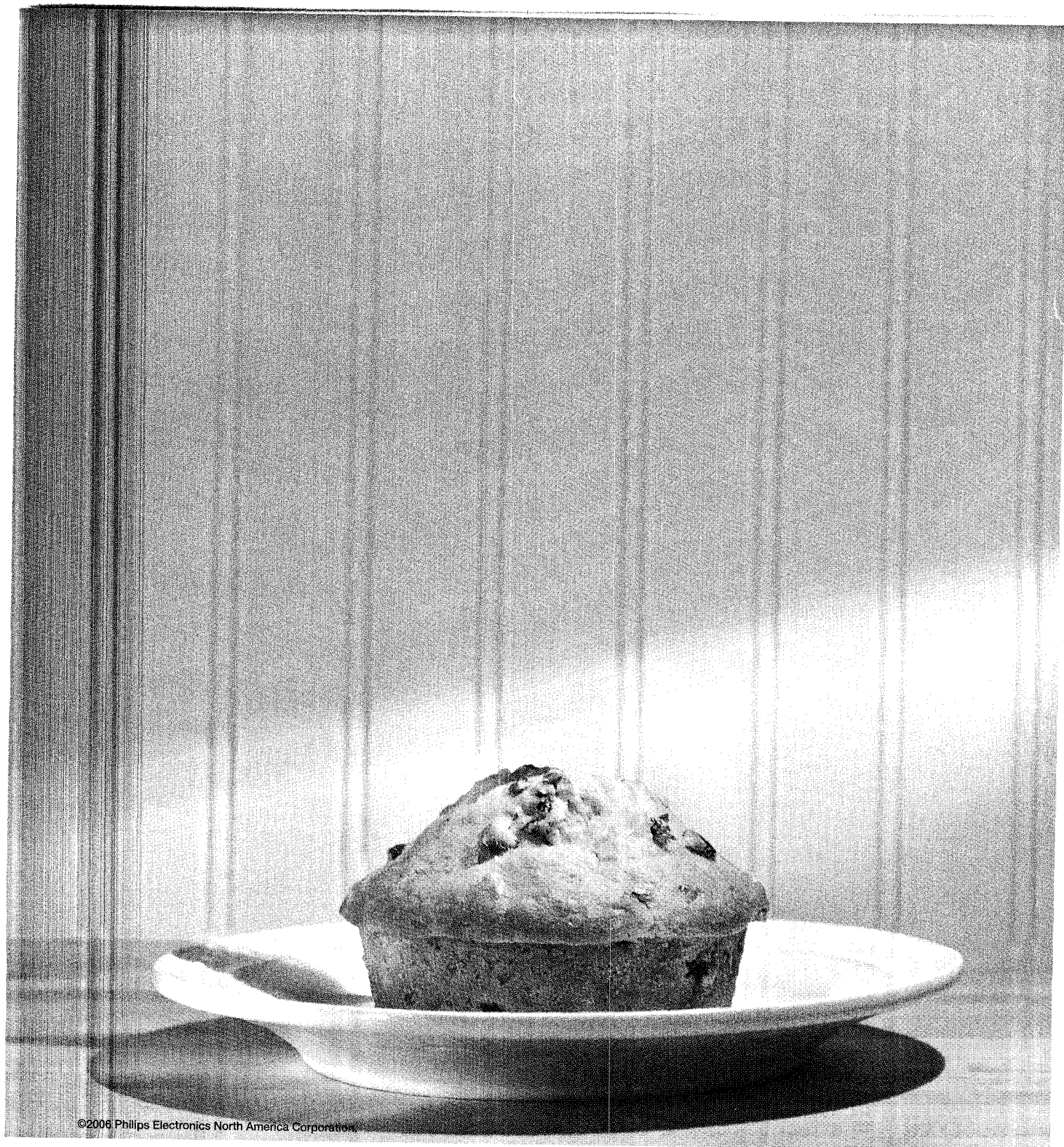
Send words that meet Pete Anderson's or Daniel Scheub's needs to *Word Fugitives*, The Atlantic Monthly, P.O. Box 67375, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, or visit the *Word Fugitives* page on our Web site, at www.theatlantic.com/fugitives. Submissions must be received by October 31. Use the same addresses to submit word fugitives that you'd like The Atlantic's help in finding. Letters become the property of *Word Fugitives* and may be edited.

Readers whose queries are published and those whose words are singled out for top honors will each receive, with our thanks, a selection of recent autographed books by Atlantic authors. The next installment's correspondents will be sent Blind Into Baghdad, by James Fallows; Presidential Doodles, text by David Greenberg; and my own *Word Fugitives*.

GREG CLARKE



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